# CHRISTIAN BELIEF INTERPRETED BY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

# CHRISTIAN BELIEF INTERPRETED BY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

LECTURES DELIVERED IN INDIA, CEYLON, AND JAPAN ON THE BARROWS FOUNDATION

BY

CHARLES CUTHBERT HALL
PRESIDENT OF THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*With an Introductory Note*
BY
THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY

THE BARROWS LECTURES
1902–1903

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TO THOSE
IN INDIA, CEYLON, AND THE FAR EAST
TO WHOM THE STUDY OF RELIGION IS PRECIOUS
THIS ENDEAVOUR TO SET FORTH
THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST
IS DEDICATED
IN THE SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD AND WITH TRUE RESPECT
FOR THE VARIOUS FAITHS OF MEN

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## THE BARROWS LECTURESHIP FOUNDATION

The Barrows Lectureship was established in 1894 by Mrs. Caroline E. Haskell. The first course of lectures was delivered during the winter of 1896–1897 by Dr. John Henry Barrows, in whose honor the lectureship was named. Dr. Barrows gave one or more lectures in each of the following cities: Calcutta, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Delhi, Lahore, Amritsar, Agra, Jeypore, Ajmere, Indore, Ahmednagar, Poona, Bangalore, Vellore, Madras, Madura, Palamcotta, Tinnevelly, and Colombo. This course of lectures has been published under the title, *Christianity, the World Religion.* The second course of Barrows Lectures was delivered in Calcutta and elsewhere in India, by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, during the winter of 1898–1899. This course of lectures has not been published.

The letter of Mrs. Haskell to President Harper, in which she proposes to establish this lectureship in the University of Chicago, is as follows:

*Chicago, October 12, 1894.*

*President William R. Harper:*

*My dear Sir: I take pleasure in offering to the University of Chicago the sum of twenty thousand dollars for the founding of a second Lectureship on the Relations of Christianity and the Other Religions. These lectures, six or more in number, are to be given in Calcutta (India), and, if deemed best, in Bombay, Madras, or some other of the chief cities of Hindustan, where large numbers of the educated Hindus are familiar with the English language. The wish, so earnestly*

*expressed by Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar, that a lectureship, like that which I had the privilege of founding last summer, might be provided for India, has led me to consider the desirability of establishing in some great collegiate center, like Calcutta, a course of lectures to be given, either annually or, as may seem better, biennially, by leading Christian scholars of Europe, Asia, and America, in which, in a friendly, temperate, conciliatory way, and in the fraternal spirit which pervaded the Parliament of Religions, the great questions of the truths of Christianity, its harmonies with the truths of other religions, its rightful claims and the best methods of setting them forth, should be presented to the scholarly and thoughtful people of India.*

*It is my purpose to identify this work, which, I believe, will be a work of enlightenment and fraternity, with the University Extension Department of the University of Chicago, and it is my desire that the management of this Lectureship should lie with yourself, as President of all the Departments of the University; with Rev. John Henry Barrows, D.D., the Professorial Lecturer on Comparative Religion; with Professor George S. Goodspeed, the Associate Professor of Comparative Religion; and with those who shall be your and their successors in these positions. It is my request that this lectureship shall bear the name of John Henry Barrows, who has identified himself with the work of promoting friendly relations between Christian America and the people of India. The committee having the management of these lectures shall also have the authority to determine whether any of the courses shall be given in Asiatic or other cities outside of India.*

*In reading the proceedings of the Parliament of Religions, I have been struck with the many points of harmony between the different faiths, and by the possibility of so presenting Christianity to others as to win their favorable interest in its truths. If the committee shall decide to utilize this Lectureship still further in calling forth the views of scholarly representatives of non-Christian faiths, I authorize and shall approve such a decision Only good will grow out of such a comparison of views.* . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

*It is my wish that, accepting the offer I now make, the committee of the University will correspond with the leaders of religious thought in India, and secure from them such helpful suggestions as they may readily give. I cherish the expectation that the Barrows Lectures will prove, in the years that shall come, a new golden bond between the East and West. In the belief that this foundation will be blessed by our heavenly Father to the extension of the benign influence of our great University, to the promotion of the highest interests of humanity, and to the enlargement of the Kingdom of Truth and Love on earth, I remain, with much regard,*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Caroline E. Haskell.*

In conformity with this letter of gift, the following principles and regulations governing the Barrows Lectureship have been established:

1. A Committee, consisting of the President of the University of Chicago and the Professor of Comparative Religion, is intrusted with the management of the Lectureship.

2. Nominations to the Lectureship are made by the Committee and confirmed by the Board of Trustees of the University.

3. The Lecturer holds office for two years, during which period he is expected to deliver the series of lectures in a place or places agreed upon between himself and the Committee.

4. During his term of office, or in the year following its expiration, the Lecturer is expected to publish his lectures, at The University of Chicago Press, in the series known as "The Barrows Lectures," and to deposit two copies of the same with the Librarian of the University of Chicago, one of which is to be placed in the General Library of the University, the other in the Departmental Library of Comparative Religion.

5. The Committee is empowered to add to these regulations any others which shall be in harmony with the terms or spirit of the Letter of Gift.

# PREFACE

It is with hesitation that I submit to Western readers the simple record of this attempt to preach Christ in the East. The publication of these Lectures has been long delayed by reason of circumstances beyond my control.

The task of a Barrows Lecturer in the Orient is delicate and difficult. He goes as a representative of Western University life to confer with his equals, the educated men of the Eastern hemisphere, upon matters of seriousness and weight. Thorough philosophical training, combined with extensive knowledge of Eastern history and institutions, is a desirable qualification for this work. I did not have this qualification. The appointment came to me unsought. It was accepted under a sense of duty, and was fulfilled under a consciousness of many limitations.

As a part of my obligation to the University of Chicago, the Lectures now are published; without apology, but also without pretence of learning. I hope that those, in America and Great Britain, who shall read these Lectures, may believe with what unaffected diffidence they are now made public.

They appear, in this authorised edition, precisely in the form in which they were delivered in India. No attempt has been made to extend or to alter them, nor to record the alterations made in their delivery in Japan. Those alterations appear in the Tokyo editions, which are in English and in Japanese. The recapitulations, at certain points, of foregoing arguments have not been omitted. The forms of local delivery have been retained; my desire being to set before Western readers, as exactly as possible,

the manner and style of the work done in India, for Indians. The Syllabus, which was found helpful in India, has been reproduced from the original sheets printed in the Madras edition.

The Lectures were given in full in the five University Cities of India: Calcutta, Allahabad, Lahore, Bombay, Madras; and, in Japan, at Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Tokyo, and Sendai. Parts of the course were given in the Indian cities, Benares, Delhi, Poona, Vellore, and Madura; also in Colombo and Kandy, Ceylon; and in Okayama, Japan. They were heard principally by Indian and Japanese graduates and undergraduates. In India and Ceylon the services of an interpreter were not needed, by reason of the prevalent use of English in University circles. In Japan I enjoyed the privilege of having for my constant companion and gifted interpreter, the Reverend Masumi Hino, M.A., B.D., Professor of Philosophy in the Doshisha, Kyoto, a graduate of the Union Theological Seminary. Professor Hino, assisted by the Reverend Mr. Harada, of Kobe, has translated the Lectures into the Japanese language.

I desire to express my sense of the courtesy of Oriental audiences, which, without exception, gave patient and sympathetic hearing to Lectures containing opinions favourable to a religion of which few of the auditors were adherents. It was never other than a pleasure to address these responsive assemblies, which, invariably, made me conscious of their welcome. Never did I feel the slightest sense of race alienation or intellectual remoteness. I felt myself to be among friends, who, trained under other traditions, and looking upon life from other points of view, were, nevertheless, truly my brothers, my fellow-seekers after God. I look back upon many occasions when, in the presence of a thousand Orientals, I felt the

same spiritual reciprocity that I have known under similar conditions in the presence of my own countrymen.

Those who would enter into the spirit of these Lectures must, for the moment, dismiss their own well-grounded Christian belief, forget their own Christian experience, lay aside denominational interests, and discharge the mind of racial prejudice. They must let themselves be transported, in imagination, into the pantheistic atmosphere of the East, where religion is the chief business of life, while the validity of personal religious experience is discarded, by many, as illusion. Assuming this mental attitude, they must consent to hear certain of the fundamental ideas of the Christian religion discussed in other terms than those formed in the moulds of Western sectarian orthodoxy. They must, if but for the moment, admit that there is a Christian essence, which, like a disembodied spirit, may subsist without the corporeal vesture of theological definition sanctioned by Western usage. They must, in theory at least, grant the possibility of setting forth this Christian essence without involving the aid of Western ecclesiasticism. They must remember that the religion of Jesus Christ, and its Semitic antecedents and cognates, were primarily Oriental; and that modern Christianity in Europe and America represents enormous divergence from the primitive type, and enormous adaptation to historical and social conditions peculiar to the West. Toward these adaptations the East may, not without reason, decline to look favourably; preferring, for herself, the primitive type, with its accentuation of Oriental features.

Approaching these Lectures in the spirit indicated, one will not be surprised to find them placing the accent of thought where one would not be likely to place it, if

addressing a Christian congregation in Europe or America. One remembers that many of the axioms of Western Christian beliefs cease to be axioms east of Aden. The Personality of God, the reality of the finite self, the validity of experience, the importance of the historical basis, are matters that we assume in London or New York. To assume them in Benares is fatuous. There, not only are the concrete religious interests unlike our own (as, for example, the sanctity of animals, the reincarnation of souls, the adoration of Mother Ganga, the spiked charpoys of ascetics), but also the ultimate philosophical conceptions of the Universe and of the Absolute are unlike our own.

He who, confident in his Western tradition, ignores the differentia of Eastern thinking, and preaches Christian truth to the subtle students of Allahabad precisely in the terms to be employed at Oxford or at Harvard, while he may interest the few who have become Europeanised in their thinking, runs the risk of remaining unintelligible to the many whose intellectual presuppositions have almost nothing in common with his own. And if, insisting that the Christian essence can be clothed only in the vocabulary of his sectarian orthodoxy, he proceeds to attack the views of other Christians or to disparage the philosophy of his Indian auditors, he may learn by bitter experience that the pent-up scorn and hatred in the long-suffering heart of the East will, on sufficient provocation, discharge itself against the philosophical intolerance of a Western, even as against his racial haughtiness.

Nothing could be more misleading than to assume that, because India has been forced by the fortunes of war to accept European government, and to assimilate European institutions, it is therefore more hospitable to the conven-

tional thought-forms of Western Christendom, in matters of religion. On the contrary, there is reason to suppose that the hostility of educated Indians to Christianity springs not from hatred of Christ, whom many non-Christian Indians love and honour, but rather from irritating association of the Christian religion with Western authority, through ecclesiastical, theological, and ceremonial channels of influence.

If Christianity be presented to the sensitive Indian mind as a product of Western life, the chances are many that the presentation shall be met with sullen aversion or scornful rejection by those who have the self-possession that is born of culture. But if, on the other hand, the Christian essence can be regarded as separable from its Western ecclesiastical adaptations, and can be presented as lending itself to the modes of Eastern thought, the bearer of that message shall not lack a welcome.

It must also be borne in mind by those who read the following Lectures that the absence of accent upon the historical data of the Christian religion is an intentional omission. It corresponds with the relative indifference to the historical basis that appears in contemporary Indian religious thinking. Every religious question is of interest to an Indian, but he approaches all from the metaphysical rather than from the historical point of view. Fundamental problems of historical criticism have absorbed the attention of the West. The East regards those problems with indifference or with impatience. The West has been much engaged in accentuating the historic Jesus and his teachings, as differentiated from Pauline metaphysic. One does not question the advantage of such discussion for Western minds built with special gifts of historical perception. But to the Oriental religious thinker, the sphere

of historical criticism is too local and too reduced in measure to meet universal conditions. The keen accuracy of Occidental scholarship delights in the Synoptic Gospels, and seeks to confine the essence of Christianity within the lines of the narrative. The mind of the meditative East is interested, passively, in the historicity of Jesus, but, when attracted to Christianity, glows with religious passion before the Christ of the Fourth Gospel and the Christ of the Epistles. The Oriental thinking that suffuses the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles is suited to Eastern minds, and that interpretation of Christianity shall best command the attention of the East that best conserves and most richly exhibits the high metaphysical and mystical values of the Bible.

At the present stage in the Christianisation of the East one may perhaps venture the statement that the most urgent and vital things to be done are these: to give moral content to the Idea of God; to differentiate the Incarnation of the Son of God from the incarnations of Hinduism; to ethicise religion in the thought and practice of the individual. Each one of these ends calls for the most careful preparation of mind and spirit on the part of those who undertake the solemn task of discussing before Indian or Japanese audiences of culture the major propositions of the Christian faith. The preparation of mind should involve the largest attainable knowledge of the metaphysic of pantheism and of the connotations of human personality, under a pantheistic system of thinking. With this should be joined the clearest possible view of whatsoever is universal and permanent in the field of Christian thought as distinguished from whatsoever is local, sectarian, and transitional. The pathway to such a point of view must advance through and beyond the Synoptics to

the uttermost height of the Apostolic Christology. For one of Western birth, who attempts in the sensitised atmosphere of modern India to give moral content to the Idea of God, to differentiate the Incarnation of the Son of God from the incarnations of Hinduism and to ethicise religion in the thought and practice of the individual, there must be a preparation of spirit as well as a preparation of mind. Intellectual research is not enough. There must be born within one a chastened and humble temper, a heart of love. The pride of Anglo-Saxon birth must be subdued; the fierce intolerance toward the halting, irresolute, dreaming East must be rebuked and overthrown by Christlike love. Reverence must supplant contempt, and the honour of brotherhood the pious disdain that stoops to save what it cannot respect. Until this temper prevails, religious teachers cannot win toward evangelical Christianity the respectful consideration of many educated Indians.

Within the last few years, owing to the rapid march of events and the rapid change of international conditions, interest in Oriental affairs and in Oriental ideas has been quickened in all circles of culture throughout the Western world. The increased interest proceeds not merely from that curiosity which promotes travel and discovery, and not merely from that growing attention to world-affairs which is a feature of modern intellectuality. In addition to these sources of interest, there is an advancing appreciation of the East in many quarters. An opinion steadily gains ground that the East is the home of ideas and forces which are to have a significant bearing on the future civilisation of the world; that the East has some function to discharge toward the West, or some message to give to the West, as yet but dimly perceived by itself and by the rest of world. It is felt, with something like a sense

of destiny, that the age is dawning in which that function, whatever it be, is to be administered; that message, what- it be, delivered.

By some, who view the East with suspicion and race antipathy, that vague sense of a future influence to be exerted by East on West is called the "Yellow Peril." By those who have come sufficiently near to the Eastern mind to discern its point of view, and to be taken, measurably, into its confidence, this so-called Peril exists only in theory; and the future message of the mysterious East to the strenuous and practical West appears rather to be a metaphysical and religious message, to be delivered, not with the rude force of armed intrusion, but with the magnetic subtlety of silent influence, addressing the innermost soul of the West. In any case, the presence of this conviction that the East is a growing force in world-politics, and that the East is to be heard from in ways undreamed of by our forefathers, suggests that the present and future attitude of the Orient toward the Christian religion and the Christian ethics is a matter of high importance. By this attitude must be determined the nature of the influence that, apparently, is about to emerge from the East and to liberate itself upon the world.

In conclusion, I desire to thank the University of Chicago for many courtesies and much patience toward myself in connection with this attempt to fulfill the requirements of the Barrows Lectureship. I wish also to thank the authorities of the University Press for permission to employ orthographical forms according to English usage.

CHARLES CUTHBERT HALL.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
June, A. D. 1905.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The rapid growth in America of an interest in Oriental studies is a feature of the intellectual history of our time. This development has not been the result of any direct political contact with the East; it has owed more to its association with the modern study of Comparative Religion to which America has, from the first, accorded an enthusiastic welcome. In the University of Chicago this science has secured prominent recognition, and the foundation by Mrs. Haskell of the Barrows Lectureship with special reference to India has emphasised the spirit and aim with which these studies are being cultivated.

Of this aim, both on its intellectual and spiritual side, no better illustration can be found than in this volume, which contains the Lectures delivered in the cold season 1902–1903 in the leading cities of India by Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, President of the Union Theological Seminary of New York, the third in the succession of Barrows Lecturers on this unique foundation.

It is not difficult to understand how the mental attitude and the religious outlook presented in these lectures have found so congenial a soil in the minds of American religious thinkers. The process going on around them, by which a great national life is being evolved through the confluence of so many streams of independent national history, is full of suggestions of that larger process which has been going on throughout the ages in the wider field of the religious history of mankind. This wide outlook is naturally forced on the thinker placed amid such surroundings; and it is perhaps easier for him than for those

who are inclosed within more fixed and more unchangeable national boundaries to conceive the larger movement. To understand it aright it is necessary to view the various religious developments in their purely ideal aspects; and the religious and intellectual detachment which such a view demands comes more easily to those who contemplate these movements from a distance than to those whose contact with their actual present result tends to obscure their perception of the ideal elements which lie behind them. However this may be, the reader of these Lectures must be struck by their philosophic grasp and breadth of conception, quite as much as by the eloquent expression which they furnish of the author's sympathy with the religious strivings of all who in every age have been seekers after God.

Many, I think, will admit that the attitude toward the ethnic religions maintained throughout these Lectures, which regards them as lying not outside but within the economy of the Divine purpose, is truer to our highest conception of God and to the teaching of the Christian revelation than the view which it has so largely displaced. Some of the early Christian apologists occupied substantially the same ground when they attributed to the direct agency of the Spirit of God the high aspirations and religious endeavours of select spirits in the ancient world, and our Lord Himself has said of the doers of the truth that they "come to the light that their deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." Dr. Hall not only accepts this position in regard to the workings of the religious consciousness of India; he has interwoven this thought into the entire fabric of his argument, and has employed it as his main chance for approach to the minds of his Indian hearers and readers.

By the frankness and sincerity with which this point of view was adhered to throughout, these addresses were eminently fitted to win a sympathetic hearing from the Indian audiences to which they were delivered; and those who are cognizant of the impression produced in the various centres where educated Indians gathered to hear them can bear testimony to the appreciative response which they awakened. It would, indeed, be difficult to find a better example of a Christian approach to the non-Christian mind than that which meets us in this series of Lectures. Appearing now in printed form, they lack that subtile quality which as spoken they derived from the magnetic personality of the lecturer; the eloquence of the living voice, too, is wanting; but the spirit remains, and will continue to win for them an increasing appreciation both in the East and in the West. India is a land which craves for sympathy; it is quick to detect the accents of true Christian love, and such love never fails of its response.

It did not fall within the scope of these Lectures to discuss the present religious conditions in India. If such discussion had been in place, Dr. Hall would, doubtless, have made it clear that it is possible to do justice to the highest and the best in Indian thought without shutting one's eyes to the sadness of its failures. Of this spiritual failure and degeneracy the best Indian minds are profoundly conscious; thoughtful spiritual men recognise and bewail it. But the lecturer had to deal with the ideal side only, his special aim being to exhibit Christ as the Fulfiller and His religion as the realisation of that ideal toward which humanity has been feeling its uncertain way through all the ages. He estimates at their highest these aspirations and achievements of the human

spirit; but he leaves the reader in no doubt as to their incompleteness and one-sidedness. The secret of their inadequacy to explain God and man, and to lead man up to his truer life in God, is expounded with philosophic thoroughness, and yet with all tenderness; while the adequacy and completeness of the revelation of God in Christ are set forth and illustrated in the light that comes from man's religious experience.

To the Christian reader the apologetic value of such a method must be obvious, while the spirit in which the method is followed out ought to disarm prejudice and win for the argument here presented the candid consideration of those to whom it is specially addressed. The result is all the more likely to be secured in this case, in which the argument is transferred from the region of mere intellectual discussion to that of spiritual experience. We know how possible it is, when religions are compared and discussed from a purely intellectual standpoint, to arouse antagonisms which entirely defeat the highest ends of religious thought; but religious experience rests on the ultimate, the deepest foundations of human life; it touches that which is most universal in man; and religious discussion within this hallowed region ought not to alienate, but to invite. It is along such lines that the thought of these Lectures moves, and to this they owe much of their attractiveness as well as their special religious value. An argument thus overshadowed by the eternities has no place in it for acrimonious controversy; it abides in the inner sanctuary from which the clamour of rivalry, conflict, and triumph is rigidly excluded. Here the lecturer has shown his peculiar strength; and we may cherish the expectation that this distinctive note of his teaching will preserve for India the memory of his visit.

Those whom long residence in India has made familiar with the peculiar religious attitude of the Indian mind cannot fail to be struck by the exactness with which Dr. Hall has comprehended the situation. It is evident from these Lectures that, although Dr. Hall's first actual contact with the people of India dates from the time of this visit, his mental contact with them is of much older standing, and that the positions he has advanced are the fruit, not only of a careful study of the ancient things of India, but of a very extensive knowledge of the present movements of Indian religious thought.

At different points the Lectures suggest views of the Christian religion that are of the highest importance to its followers. To one of these I would direct attention in closing this brief introduction. The thought that the Christian religion cannot find its full expression until all nations have entered into its life is not new; but it has found in these Lectures clear and characteristic utterance.

The general theme, as well as the surroundings amid which it was discussed, was well fitted to suggest such thoughts regarding the future possibilities of the Christian faith. The fact that the higher thought of India has ever been centred in religion, that through the centuries it has wrestled with religion's ultimate problems, that more keenly than most other lands it has felt the burden of this unintelligible world, may well awaken the expectation that the religion of Christ may yet receive a more emphatic interpretation on some of its many sides when the heart of India has laid hold of its life and doctrine. The church's slowness to obey her Master's great commission has long delayed the full realisation of her own destiny. A conception of the Kingdom of God which implies that each nation or section of the world has its own con-

tribution to bring to the religious interpretation of the common catholic faith is in accordance with the surest teachings of the history of the past, and needs to be emphasised both in the interests of the church and of the world which it is commissioned to evangelise. To the thoughtful Christian it supplies the stimulus of an inspiring vision, and to the non-Christian world it presents the Christian religion as standing in a new and nearer relation to itself. "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." Such has ever been the coming of the Son of man in the actual history of the world. As the lightning coming out of the heavens seems to obliterate by its flash of sudden glory all our earthly directions and distances, and unites our eastern and our western horizons by its mystic chain of living light, so the divinely manifested Christ shines forth upon the world as the Lord from heaven, obliterating all mental distances and national diversities, uniting the East and the West, and binding together in the bonds of one Divine universal love the sundered nations of men.

D. MACKICHAN,
*Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay.*

BOMBAY, June 20, 1903.

# SYLLABUS

## LECTURE I

### THE NATURE OF RELIGION

1. Joy of the lecturer on reaching India, for whose people he has had a lifelong affection. He comes as the ambassador of the University of Chicago in the United States of America. Intellectual and religious earnestness of Indians realised in university circles in America.
2. Statement of general subject: Christian belief interpreted by Christian experience. Proposal to enter upon a study of the Christian religion in the modern spirit and from the modern point of view. Modern study of religion has acquired new form and content. The new science of religion has superseded disregard of the beliefs of others. Interest of western scholars in eastern religions.
3. This interest arises from three causes: modern views of the unity of mankind, of the co-operative evolution of the race, and of the origin of religion. Discussion of these causes:
   *a*) Unity of the race not superficial and apparent, but profound and esoteric. To admit this does not subvert natural distinctions and commit one to radical democracy. It enlarges the religious problem.
   *b*) Condition of the human race not fixed, but advancing as toward a goal. Every form of faith, therefore, acquires an evolutionary significance as a contribution toward the progress of mankind.
   *c*) Many of the noblest minds of our time, gaining new views of the origin of religion, can be satisfied no longer with past theories of priestly intervention as the cause of religion, or of one primitive revelation. The modern search for the origin of religion has considered animism, or the worship of spirits, reverence for the departed, as leading to the worship of ancestors, and the sense of per-

sonal insignificance in the presence of incalculable powers of nature. Belief of the lecturer that the origin of religion may be best learned from the study of its highest forms, and that these point to a yearning for the Infinite which is common among men.

4. This view of the origin of religion leads to the question: Whence this yearning for God? The answer is given that it proceeds from the Spirit of God within ourselves. This opinion adds reverence and tenderness to the study of every form of faith.
5. It is recognised that weighty arguments appear to justify indifference on the part of educated Hindus toward a thoughtful examination of the Christian religion. Statement of the argument from superior antiquity. Statement of the argument from lack of correspondence between East and West. Statement of the argument from supposed philosophical incompatibility. The force of these arguments being recognised, the broad discussion of the subject yet may be possible, inasmuch as the lecturer comes, not as an European, but as an American; not as a churchman, but as a university man; not as a controversialist, but in the spirit of gentleness and fellowship. Ambition of the lecturer to lift the discussion into the calm atmosphere of fraternal comparison of views.
6. To this end three undertakings are desirable on the part of eastern students who consent to examine the Christian religion on its merits—an intellectual elimination, an historical retrospect, a philosophical adjustment. Discussion of these undertakings.
   *a*) The intellectual elimination is the dismissal, as irrelevant, of certain considerations that tend to enter into the Oriental study of the Christian religion and to vitiate the conclusions of the student. These considerations are political—the entanglement of Christianity with civil and military powers of government; ecclesiastical—the entanglement of Christianity with the sectarian disputes of Christians; ethical—the entanglement of Christianity with the moral unworthiness of many of its nominal representatives. He who would explore the content of the

Christian religion must withdraw his mind from considering these local representations of its pure and profound essence. Christianity not a product of the West. Christ towers above European civilisation and is independent of it.

*b*) The historical retrospect deals with the evolution of the Christian religion as it relates itself to the genealogy of races. Two race-names mysteriously involved—Aryan and Semite. The Aryan the common ancestor of Indian and European. This suggestion of kinship welcomed by the lecturer. Discussion of various theories of the cradle of our common ancestry. Upon any theory of race-origins the Christian religion derived neither from the Aryan of the East nor from the Aryan of the West. Emergence of Judaism from the earlier Semitic civilisation. Uniqueness of Judaism—"a destroyed nation, but an indestructible people." Extraordinary supremacy of Judaism in religious faculty and in the power exercised through religion upon mankind. A consideration of this fact dispels the irritating suggestion that the Christian religion is a product of the West. Asia, not Europe, the cradle of Christianity.

*c*) The philosophical adjustment recommended is not the surrender of intellectual inheritance, but the broad-minded effort to understand the intellectual positions of others. "Put yourself in his place." Such philosophical adjustment not hasty self-commitment to new opinions, but a judicial, deliberative, open-minded attitude, willing to inspect the foundations of another's thought. Such an attitude worthy of those who believe the unity of the race of mankind. Beneath all differentiations the fact remains that we are men. As such we can afford to open our hearts to one another and to seek to understand one another This spirit strongly recommended as suitable in the present series of lectures.

## LECTURE II

### THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD AND ITS RELATION TO EXPERIENCE

1. Brief restatement of the mental attitude desirable for the study of the Christian religion by educated Orientals—intellectual elimination, historical retrospect, philosophical adjustment.
2. Idea of God considered as the goal of knowledge. Extreme empiricism limits knowledge to the world of phenomena and supplies no basis for a philosophical conception of God. Fundamental postulate of the Christian religion the existence of a God who can be known. Its chief end the knowledge of God.
3. Apparent correspondence of this statement with the Hindu religious aspiration, "He who knows Brahma attains the highest." This common belief in the knowableness of the Infinite makes possible a calm examination of Christian conceptions, even though the conclusions reached are far removed from those of Hinduism.
4. Essential nature of Christian theism cannot be understood until the two ideas, "God" and "human personality," are defined in the terms of Christian belief. Consideration of methods of interpreting the idea of God.
   *a*) The deistic or transcendent method intensifies the distinction between God and the world: God being an objective person transcending and living apart from His world, and interested as a king-emperor is interested in his subjects. The immemorial tradition of royalty encourages this conception of God. Its effects variable, including fatalism and self-torturing renunciation of a world conceived as without God. Christian theism unable to entertain this view of God because of its dualistic conclusion, which involves the practical contradiction of asserting Infinity while maintaining a finite reality which it describes as not-God, an existence altogether separate from God. The phraseology of Scripture, intent on developing the monotheistic conception, constantly refers

to God in the terms of transcendence, thereby retaining an element of truth that must be preserved for the deepening of reverence. Yet the interpretation of that truth in terms that would set off the world from God as a region apart from His infinity is as repugnant to the Christian as to the pantheist.

*b*) The method of negation leads to the concept of an undefinable Absolute without attributes or qualities; the unqualified resultant remaining after all that it is not has been eliminated. Attractiveness of this philosophy of the Infinite for many pure and profound natures of East and West. A way of escape from the confusion and weariness of existence. The principle of illusion considered. Correspondence of pantheism with a deep element in the life of humanity; viz., to find relief from the weariness of life by undermining the reality of the finite. The pantheism of Spinoza. Pantheism a protest against petty conceptions of the Infinite. The Supreme Self the only reality. The subdivisions of the phenomenal world regarded by the purest pantheism as limitations imposed upon the absoluteness of the Supreme Self. Relief from this conclusion found in the negation of finitude as illusory. Christian recognition of this profound principle.

5. The Christian religion differentiated from all pantheistic systems by its method of reaching a conception of the Infinite One and by its estimate of human personality.

*a*) Philosophical distinction between the method of pantheism and the method of Christianity in arriving at the idea of God. Pantheism aspires toward the complete elimination of content, its ideal being simplicity of being. Christianity also advances by the path of negation toward the Supreme Self, but, having eliminated finitude and reached the concept of the Simple Absolute, it proceeds to fill that Simple Absolute with the attributes of Infinite Personality, an inexhaustible wealth of qualities and modes of being—the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

*b*) Philosophical distinction between the method of pantheism and the method of Christianity in the estimate of human personality. Monistic idealism of certain Oriental

schools of thought. Unreality of personal distinctions and illusory nature of personal experience.

Christian point of view: Individuality of God carries with it as a logical necessity the individuality of man. Self-completing of Divine Personality involves its expression in the terms of corresponding finite intelligences. Christian idea of the Trinity as the self-completing of Divine Personality through subjective differentiation. Finitude also necessary to complete Divine self-realisation. This necessitates the reality of human personality. Man a differentiated emanation from God. The psychological reality of the human individual the source of moral independence and the ground of moral responsibility.

6. Purpose of foregoing affirmation to establish a basis on which to estimate the religious value of the distinctive beliefs of Christianity. "Value," objective and absolute, or subjective and relative. The term here is used in the latter sense: the religious value of Christian truth in the experience of the individual.

   "Experience" defined. Objection considered that experience is illusory. Reality of a self in man cannot be denied. Experience the totality of what the individual self in man thinks, does, and suffers. Religious experience the totality of effects realised in the self-consciousness of the believer in a religion. Distinctive nature of Christian experience. Purpose of lecture to examine into the power of Christian ideas to add to the joy, power, and efficiency of the present life.

7. The Christian religion rests its appeal to the individual life upon its belief in God and its belief in man. Christian idea of God assimilates elements of various philosophical systems — transcendence, immanence, monism. Relation of this complex idea to personal experience founded upon the Christian conception of man as a self-conscious, free, responsible being.

   Ethical monism differs from Christian experience in the nature of its incentive, in the nature of its obligation, in the nature of its satisfaction. Discussion of these particulars.

8. Elements in the content of the Christian idea of God. The path of negation leads up to the path of affirmation, disclosing content of great richness. Four elements suggested

for consideration: timelessness, presence, character, manifestation.

9. Timelessness of God. Perplexing nature of the time-relation in human experience. Method of pessimism, fatalism, theosophy in dealing with time-relations. Christian religion takes refuge from the transitoriness of life and the illusory nature of time-relations in the Divine independence of time-relations. "The eternal God is thy refuge."

   Time-relations considered as a mode of the Divine self-realisation.

   Value for Christian experience of the conception of the timelessness of God: a basis upon which to build our earthly life, an anchorage for thought, giving stability to purpose, dignity to character, hope for the world.

   The timelessness of God one of the perpetual inspirations of the Christian religion.

10. Remaining elements reserved for next lecture.

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## LECTURE III

### THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE SUPREME MANIFESTATION OF GOD

1. Mere independence of time-relations not in itself a quality having religious value. Hence, timelessness of God to be considered in connection with other aspects of His being. The conception of the presence of God in His world and in every creature expressed in Scripture and in later philosophical poetry. Christian view of the reality of the world a middle view between illusion and materialism. Reality of individualistic distinctions affirmed, but that reality not independent of the action of the mind in apprehending phenomena. The unity of life is the self-realisation of the Infinite Mind in and through all that is. The whole earth filled with God; yet this not pantheism, but the presence of self-conscious, self-determined Life. God's presence the basis of spiritual potency in human life. This fact lies at the basis of Christian thought. The presence of God is the consecration of nature. The presence of God is deliverance from the

loneliness of finite personality. The presence of God gives rational continuity to individual life and to the life of the world.

2. The presence of God to be viewed in connection with the character of God. The charm of Christianity centres in the character of God as realised in the Christian faith. "God is light," "God is love." Consideration of the light symbol. Recognition of its value for non-Christian faiths. Physical, intellectual, and ethical connotations of the idea of light. Each of these connotatious considered in its relation to the Divine character. The glory, wisdom, and righteousness of God. Symbolic suggestion of self-mauifestation. "God is love," the central truth of Christianity. Love a relation of subject and object. The Divine Essence contains within itself personal distinctions whereby love is realised. This love, entering time-relations, expresses attitude of God toward humanity. The heart of man slow to believe that God is love. Vastness of that thought. Tendency to regard God as unfriendly. This tendency augmented by the prevalence of evil. Christian religion founded upon the belief in antecedent love, which originates in the Divine Essence and is universal and personal. Significance of this belief as resisting pessimistic depression and as offering a channel for pent-up affections of the soul.
3. The presence and character of God to be regarded in the light afforded by the manifestation of God. The self-revelation of Deity an idea not peculiar to the Christian religion. Vast range of this idea in the field of eastern thought. Self-revelation of Deity may be regarded as apparent rather than real, occurring as a concession to human limitations; or it may be regarded as the outcome of metaphysical relations inherent in the nature of God. Incarnations of Krishna. Polytheism. Christian belief in a self-revealing principle inherent in the nature of God as personal. Complete Divine self-realisation demands self-revelation to finite existences. The manifestation of God normal.
4. This Divine self-manifestation enriches Christian experience, because a revelation of presence and of moral character. The manifestation of the presence of God is made (*a*) through

nature, (*b*) through history, (*c*) through the spiritual illumination of man. Manifestation through nature realised through the principle of evolution. Influence of evolution upon modern religious thought. Manifestation through history contrasted with fatalism and pessimism. Philosophy of history. The purpose of the Eternal. The hopefulness of evolution in the realm of history. Manifestation through the spiritual illumination of man. The indwelling of God. The witness of the Spirit. This not pantheism; but the value of pantheism acknowledged. The indwelling presence viewed by Christianity in connection with the separateness of personal individuality. The channel of revelation. The Holy Scriptures of the Christian religion occurring in the evolutionary order of Divine self-disclosure. The relation of these Scriptures to the Jewish nation incidental. They are of universal significance, a common doorway to the clearest vision of a present God.

5. The self-revelation of the character of God is made in the Person and the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Moral character manifested most conclusively in the terms of concrete personality. The principle of life as the interpretation of character conditions the Incarnation of the Son of God. Incarnation of Jesus Christ not the birth of a hero, but the revelation of the character of the Eternal under the form of time and in the terms of human action. Relation of this conception to the reality of the finite individual. Discrimination between admiration for the moral beauty of the historic Christ and essential Christianity which regards the Incarnation of the Son of God as the incarnate manifestation of the eternal principle of Sonship that is in the Deity. This point of view assumed throughout the succeeding lectures. Discussion thus rendered unnecessary of antecedent probability of revelation, relative merits of character as between Christ and non-Christian sages, and resemblance between certain Christian and pre-Christian traditions.

6. Pre-Christian religions and the problem of existence. Their profound realisation of the sorrow and toil of life. Yearning to escape from finitude. Salvation considered as a deliverance from life. These conceptions contain the note of uni-

versality and point to the deep-seated human consciousness of lack of power to cope with the evil of life. The Incarnation of the Son of God considered in relation to this universal yearning. Its message, the message, not of escape from life, but of the redemption of life from evil. "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

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## LECTURE IV

### THE SIN OF MAN AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

1. The Christian religion, in common with other religions, recognises the fact of sin and deals with it. Sin an observed fact. Interpretations of it may differ; the fact persists. Our conception of the nature of sin determined by our conception of the nature of God and of finite personality.
2. Primary message of the Christian religion is deliverance from sin through a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. Tenderness of Christ toward the sinful world and sinful persons. His Spirit reflected in true Christianity. Fundamental idea of God as Infinite Personality. Development of this idea leads to our conception of finite personality. Man the offspring of God and a partaker of the Divine nature. Phenomenon of sin thus invested with extraordinary significance. Consideration of the relation of sin to life in the philosophy of non-Christian religions. Special consideration of the doctrine of Karma.
3. Attitude of essential Christianity toward the problem of moral evil; does not regard moral evil as a metaphysical necessity, inherent in the nature of things. Nor is the seat of evil in the region of physical being. Essential Christianity locates the seat of evil in the will of man. Inquiry into the nature of the human will. The freedom of the will. The self-assertion of the *ego* not sin. The morality of the will issues, not from the fact of volition, but from the antecedent fact of a divine order of being which is an absolute standard, and with which the human will is either in harmony or in conflict.

4. Analysis of the point of view from which Christianity regards the phenomenon of sin:
   *a*) An appreciation of the divine order of the universe as an expression of the love of God for man.
   *b*) An appreciation of the greatness of man as being capable of asserting himself against the divine order.
   *c*) An appreciation of the sorrowful and destructive results of this alienation of the finite *ego* from the benign and holy will of God.
5. Distinctive contribution of the Christian religion to the religious experience of the world touching the nature and effects of sin. Sin differentiated from outward and ceremonial uncleanness and located in the very centre of selfhood. Essence of sin consists in the self-assertion of the finite will against the divine order of life.
   *a*) Sin in its relation to God — the denial of sovereignty, an offense against holy love.
   *b*) Sin in its relation to the sinner himself — a blow dealt against one's self.
   *c*) Sin in its relations to other individuals and to society — a plague spread by the one among the many.
6. Further examination into the social significance of sin. Christ parallels love to God with love to our neighbor. Sin a social offense. Personal repentance does not undo the social consequences of sin. Study of the problem of life widespread as twentieth century opens. That study ancient in itself, but takes on new meaning in our time. It possesses a new hopefulness, a recognition of the value of the present life and the possibility of making it worth living. This new note of hopefulness in the modern study of life attributed (*a*) to the progress of physical science in discovering better modes of living; (*b*) to the advance in social science toward an appreciation of the worth of life; (*c*) to the evident discrepancy between what life is and what it might be for the masses of men.
7. The supreme question that confronts those in all lands who share this hope of reforming the condition of humanity is: where to obtain power competent to uplift the world and make it morally new. The sadness of the pre-Christian reli-

gions. Pessimistic view of life. The pessimistic philosophy unable to supply the moral dynamic for which the best thought of the present is seeking. Conviction of the lecturer that this dynamic is found alone in Jesus Christ and His holy sacrifice for men. This not discarding other religions which have accomplished other ends. It emphasises the distinctive function of Christianity, which is to uplift human lives by saving them from sin. This function attested by the Christian experience of innumerable and widely separated persons.

8. The extent and positiveness of this testimony raises the question: Who, then, is Christ? His own answer given: "I am the Alpha and the Omega."
   Examination of the work of Christ:
   *a*) Emerging in the fulness of time to co-ordinate and unify the religious life of the race.
   *b*) The self-revealing God.
   *c*) The sin-condemning Judge.
   *d*) The suffering Saviour.

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## LECTURE V

### THE IDEAS OF HOLINESS AND IMMORTALITY INTERPRETED BY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

1. Recapitulation of the foregoing argument concerning the nature of sin; the conscience of earnest men touching the social aspects of sin; the testimony of Christian experience as to the power of Christ to deliver from sin. Christ the self-revealing God; the sin-condemning Judge; the suffering Saviour.
2. The risen Christ considered as the life-giving Spirit who is the type and standard of humanity. Conformity to Christ the solution, for the individual, of the ethical problem. The evolution of the concept "Holiness." Holiness in primitive religion non-ethical, implying the reservation of objects or persons for use in connection with religious rites. Ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness. Holiness considered as self-abstraction from an illusory world. The Christian conception

of holiness assimilates the ideas of dedication of places, or persons, or physical separation from defilement, and of self-abstraction from a transitory world. The essence of the Christian conception of holiness not external and ceremonial; but inward, ethical, spiritual. The will is the seat of holiness; the essence of holiness is normal relation to God. The Christian conception of holiness rational, noble, full of hope and outlook; an idea of power. Absolute moral beauty of God's character the deepest element in this conception. Philosophical conclusion verified in history and in experience, through Jesus Christ. Ethical beauty of the character of Christ. Holiness of Christ not ceremonial.

3. The moral reason of man; its power to make rational appeals to conscience and will. Christianity exalts the dignity of man. Man of common essence with God. Differentiation of man from animals. Discussion of the doctrine of transmigration, in its relation to animals. On abstaining from the flesh of animals. Correspondence of man with God interrupted by sin. Moral conflict of the inner life; a struggle realised by the noblest natures. Instinct of the soul in temptation to appeal to God.
4. The indwelling of the Divine Spirit in the spirits of men. This indwelling not incompatible with full liberty of individuality. The holy life stands for more than the elementary instincts of kindness or compassion. It stands for more than the unaided action of the moral reason. It implies a personal Power taking up its abode in the soul. The indwelling of the Comforter.
5. This being the foundation on which the Christian conception of holiness rests, its characteristic notes of expression correspond therewith. Discussion of these.
   *a*) Attitude of the holy life toward sin involves the elements of appreciation, antagonism, sorrow. Appreciation of sin progressive in Christian experience.
   *b*) Attitude of the holy life toward self. The Yoga philosophy. Individuality. Consecration. Stewardship.
   *c*) Attitude of the holy life toward God. Desire; longing; love. Discussion of the nature of prayer.
   *d*) Attitude of the holy life toward society. Social attitude

of Christianity contrasted with Hinduism and Buddhism. Reality of the individual. Goodness of existence.

*e*) Attitude of the holy life toward a future state of being. Death. The philosophical significance of death can be stated only in the terms of life continuing beyond the grave. The Christian view of immortality, and its contribution to the worth of existence in this world.

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## LECTURE VI

### REASONS FOR REGARDING CHRISTIANITY AS THE ABSOLUTE RELIGION

1. Fairness and profitableness of broad discussion of this theme by educated men. India a suitable place for such discussion by reason of its pre-eminent interest in religious thought. Reasonableness of using the best and most available things in commerce, education, or religion, without regard to the fact that such things may be used also by those with whom, on other grounds, we are not in sympathy.
2. Two forces in modern times have promoted the possibility of such discussion as the present; viz., the growth of tolerance, and the advance in the study of comparative religion. Observations upon these. These forces interpreted by the lecturer as pointing to a larger synthesis in matters of religion, in order to a broader and more rational fellowship among seekers after God.
3. The first step toward that larger synthesis a definition of the term "absolute," as applied to religion. The term differentiated from the monarchical idea, and associated with whatever implies the opposite of the terms "provisional," "local," "temporary," and "approximate."
4. The quality of universality found to be the most distinctive note of an absolute religion. Universality of a religion not determined by number of converts, but by intrinsic capacity to meet the needs of man. This test must be applied in the categories (*a*) of the conception of God; (*b*) of time and place; (*c*) of social ideal; (*d*) of concurrence with reality.
5. Can there be conceived the existence of an absolute religion

in the world as we know it? This becomes conceivable for those who believe (*a*) the essential unity of the human race; (*b*) the universality of religious sentiment; (*c*) the practical advantages that would result from the development of such a religion. Consideration of these.

6. Does any existing religion appear to combine the characteristics required for such immense service to humanity? This determined by the question (*a*) of origin; (*b*) of philosophical method; (*c*) of moral initiative; (*d*) of hopefulness.
7. Examination of the Christian religion by these tests. The limitations and hindrances of Christianity admitted; but its fitness to be regarded as the absolute religion maintained on the grounds (*a*) of suitability of origin; (*b*) of breadth of philosophical method; (*c*) of strength of moral initiative; (*d*) of essential hopefulness.
8. The relation of the East to this absolute religion. Conclusion of the lecturer: (*a*) that the allegiance of the East to Christianity would involve no compromise of the national spirit; (*b*) that the East is needed, in order that full expression may be given to the essential conceptions of the Christian faith.

## FIRST LECTURE

### THE NATURE OF RELIGION

To be in India ; to observe its civilisation ; to commune with the leaders of its intellectual and religious life—this, for me, is the fulfilment of a long-treasured hope. From the days of my boyhood my heart has turned toward India with tender and respectful affection. Subtle are the influences that play upon our lives, swaying our emotions, predetermining our choices. These words are written in the Christian Scriptures: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." So are our lives beset from birth by viewless forces that quicken sentiment and nourish purpose, we know not how. With the persistence of the southwestern monsoon they breathe upon us from out of the ocean of an infinite past; they impel us toward a coast that the mind explores long ere the eyes behold it. So was my life impelled toward India by an invisible breath of tendency, breathing upon my years from boyhood onward; a persistent yet most gentle impulse that filled my heart with love toward brethren unseen, yet not unknown. Long before my eyes descried the headlands of your coast, long before I received the academic commission in obedience to which I have travelled hither, my heart prophesied of India, by the warmth of its longings, by the tenderness of its sympathies, by the sincerity of its admiration.

But, great as is the joy of beholding the lives toward whom one has been impelled by these desires, the mere sense of personal satisfaction could not sustain me in the

purpose that brings me hither. That purpose is not the pleasurable diversion of the traveler, nor the idyllic reverie of the sentimentalist; it is the intellectual and spiritual purpose of the seeker after truth, who, coming from the remote and youthful West, would commune with his brethren of the East concerning grave problems of the soul and of God. But it would be an act of presumption, were I, purely on personal grounds, to ask such communion with minds trained in the disciplines of ancient philosophies; or to attempt the utterance of my private convictions in the presence of students and apologists of religions that were world-forces before northern Europe had emerged from barbarism, or America had been aroused from prehistoric solitude. Not with such rashness do I speak. It is my privilege to stand in your presence as an ambassador of a University which, in that distant West, the echoes of whose activities have reached your ears, maintains at its full value the appreciation of pure thought, especially of religious thought, as that function of personality by means of which chiefly the brotherhood of men is realised and promoted. Thoughts, not things, reveal the kinship of human spirits, and by the comparison of thoughts men see in one another the common life of God. To compare political institutions or social customs or physical productions may tend only to alienation, accentuating the remoteness of the oriental point of view from that determined by the more strenuous utilitarianism of the West. And that this tendency to alienation is probable along such lines of comparison may be inferred from the fact that local and occasional circumstances, rather than universal forces, operate to fix the character of political institutions, social customs, and physical productions.

But when the mind enters the sanctuary of pure thought, it breathes the atmosphere of universality. As the sandals of the worshipper are left without the door of the mosque of Islam, so he that aspires to meditate before the shrine of truth should leave behind him whatsoever is carnal and external, should enter with that only which is of the essence of personality. Within that sanctuary of pure thought geographical and racial boundaries exist not; age-long barriers dissolve, and the vast brotherhood of souls is disclosed in the presence of fundamental problems of God and of life.

We of the West have known you as, by inheritance and by temperament, the lovers of pure thought. The threshold of that sanctuary is worn with the entering of your reverent feet. The memorials of many generations attest your fidelity as seekers after truth. And we also of the West are lovers of thought and seekers after truth. Beneath the loud note of our urgent life of action is an undertone of spiritual seriousness. For many among us the supreme interest of existence lies within the sanctuary of pure thought, in the contemplation and comparison of ideas rather than in the acquisition of things. Pre-eminently sacred in our eyes are those spiritual conceptions and beliefs which, assuming diverse forms in the several ethnic groups, are witnesses throughout the whole family of man to the fact of religion as a common possession of the world; not the idiosyncrasy of a nation, but the inseparable attribute of human life. As the representative of such a circle do I come. In the youngest of the great universities of the world, the University of Chicago, founded at the territorial centre of the American continent, the love of thought and the quest of truth flourish in an atmosphere of cosmopolitan sympathy. There the

one brotherhood of mankind is recognised, and the manifold hopes, strivings, joys, and sorrows of remote communities are honoured and, in a measure, comprehended. There, especially, the religious conceptions and convictions of distant nations are viewed with respect, and a serious effort is made to understand them, as historical expressions of one of the fundamental activities of the human mind.

The Oriental lectureship, of which I have the honour to be the present incumbent, was instituted as an evidence of that interest in the religious life of man which characterises the University of Chicago. It is the belief of the University that a comparison of points of view in matters of religion is desirable; and that effort, on the one hand to present, on the other to comprehend, the content of the leading ideas of any religion must be approved by candid minds, and may advance the cause of truth. In this spirit the University welcomes from time to time those who are competent to interpret the essential principles of Oriental faiths. To such she gives heed, desiring to comprehend the messages that they bring and to compare those messages with the characteristic conceptions of Christianity. In the same spirit, she sends, from time to time, her representatives to the East, charging them faithfully to set forth the innermost essence of the religion of Jesus Christ, and bespeaking for them that patient and generous hearing which is one of the many beautiful traditions of Indian courtesy. It is felt that such interchange of view is reasonable and wholesome. It is a substitute for that ignorance concerning the sacred beliefs of our fellow-men which is the mother of injustice and error. It is a protest against that narrowness which is willing to receive the superficial or prejudiced statements of the uninstructed in

lieu of such as are uttered with the certitude and maturity of knowledge. It is, finally, an appeal to truth, which, to all who know its value, is the one thing to be sought at all hazards, to be obtained at all costs. Truth is the pearl of great price, to gain which a man well may part with all that he has. Truth is the ideal of the single-minded, to approach which brings a delight that rewards all renunciation, a hope that survives all disquietudes involved in the reconstruction of opinion, a peace of God which passeth all understanding.

With this statement of my mission to India as a University representative, and with these observations concerning our relation to one another as lovers of pure thought and fellow-seekers after truth, I advance to the body of my subject, which has been announced as a series of *Lectures on Christian Belief Interpreted by Christian Experience.* I invite you to enter upon the study of a religion; and to do this in the modern spirit and from the modern point of view. It has been said recently that, in one sense, "the study of religion is as old as human thought, but, in another and more pertinent sense, it is the youngest of the sciences. The moment that man in a self-conscious spirit ponders over the religious beliefs which he holds, or which have been handed down to him as a legacy, he is engaged in the study of religion; and we know that such a moment comes at an early stage in the development of human culture, if not to the masses, at all events to certain individuals."[1]

In approaching India I am impressed with the fact that the educated classes pre-eminently are students of religion, learned in their faiths, and, where agnosticism has not superseded belief, jealous of their traditions.

[1] Jastrow, *The Study of Religion*, pp. 1, 2.

Intelligent communities, from the earliest times, have engaged in the study and maintenance of their respective faiths. Such study of religion marks the history of Hinduism and of Mohammedanism, even as it was conspicuous among the learned Jews of the time of Christ. Historically, this study and maintenance of one's own faith frequently has been attended with indifference and disdain toward the beliefs of others, or with attempts to restrain or to extirpate those beliefs by violence. But in modern times the study of religion has acquired new form and content, has projected itself upon new lines, has become possessed of a new spirit. The nature of this change is not that thoughtful men are less interested in what they themselves believe, but that they are more interested in what others believe, and more anxious to comprehend the relative values of all beliefs as factors in the evolution of the religious life of man in God's universe. In this sense the study of religion is not old, but new: it is the youngest, the fairest, the divinest of the sciences. It is not provincial; it is not national; it is not ecclesiastical; it is not racial; it is broadly, tenderly human. It knows no East, no West; it knows only that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek after the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being."[1]

In the West—that is to say, throughout Europe and America—this new and beautiful science of religion almost has swept away the old provincialism that permitted one to cherish his own belief and contemptuously to

[1] Acts 27: 26-28.

dismiss the beliefs of others as the meaningless vagaries of heathenism. Christians who still prefer that narrowness retain it at the price of dropping astern of the noblest modern thought. The religious thought of the West is being reconstructed on broader lines, and its leaders ascend to higher points of view and sweep a larger horizon. Nor is it difficult to account for this change, and to answer the questions put forth at Edinburgh, a few years since, by the Master of Balliol. "What is it," said he, "that has awakened the new modern interest in the science of religion, and has given rise to the persistent attempts which are now being made to investigate the facts of religious history in all times and places? What is it that has made us carry our inquiries beyond the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are directly connected with our own religious life, and beyond the classical mythology, which is immediately bound up with our literary culture; that has set to our scholars the task of analysing the sacred books of all nations, and seeking for the key of all the mythologies?"[1] I do not know with what feelings Indians regard the modern interest shown by western scholars in the sacred writings of the East. I do not know whether, in your hearts, you observe this scrutiny with satisfaction, or whether it seems to you as the irritating curiosity of aliens, intruding into your sanctuaries of thought and handling with unhallowed touch your most venerated inheritances. But I beg leave to assure you that, while some promoters of the study of comparative religion may have no warmer interest in that research than critical analysis, the essential motives behind the new science of religion are reverential and full of tenderness. These motives spring from the modern views of

[1] E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion* (Gifford Lectures), Vol. I, p. 12.

the unity of mankind, of the co-operative evolution of the race, and of the origin of religion. You will permit me to say a word concerning each of these.

It has been said that "the idea of the unity of man has, within the last century, become not merely a dogma, but an almost instinctive presupposition of all civilized men."[1] This unity is not superficial and apparent, it is profound and esoteric; it exists not in the speech or custom, but in the spirit, of humanity, beneath and within all political, social, cultural, religious, racial distinctions. To affirm it is not to deny the reality or the reasonableness of such distinctions. To believe it is not to give one's self over to a mad democracy that would obliterate natural boundaries; nor is it to attack indiscriminately the institutions of caste; still less is it to dispose of the ancient variations of religious type by a process of blind negation. I hold that even the most rigorous tenure of the doctrines of caste is compatible with an acknowledgment of the unity of mankind; and that, whatever our religious opinion may be, this acknowledgment is made an intellectual necessity by the results of scientific research into the anatomic structure, the genius, the primitive conceptions of man at all times and throughout all races. I quite agree with Nadaillac in his statement: "We believe it impossible to misapprehend or mistake the multiplied proofs that flow from modern researches, all of which affirm with an irrefutable eloquence the unity of the human species."[2] As this idea of the unity of mankind has become positive, taking on the attributes of a living force, it has swept over the field of modern thinking with the transforming power

[1] CAIRD, *loc. cit.*, p. 15.

[2] See a paper by MARQUIS DE NADAILLAC, translated from *Revue des questions scientifiques* in *Report of Board of Regents, Smithsonian Institution*, 1897 (published by Société scientifique de Bruxelles, 2d series, Vol. XII, October 20, 1897).

of a new dispensation. It has enlarged the scope of all the great human problems.

Especially has it affected the problem of religion, which no longer can be a national or tribal or ecclesiastical problem, but henceforth must be viewed as one of the universal human interests, a fact imbedded in the underlying unity of the race and expressing itself locally through many faiths and forms.

The new science of religion takes note also of the co-operative evolution of the race. The family of man is one family; the nature of man is one nature; the identity of the human spirit persists always, everywhere, beneath all distinctions. So, as from the high towers of thought men have viewed the long track of history, they have come to realise that the condition of the human race is not fixed; it advances, moving, as it were, toward a goal. In this evolutionary progress of the race, as in the struggle of personal existence, nations, like individuals, take part, contributing to, or fighting against the onward movement. That onward movement is spiritual as well as material; it consists not only in the extension of civilisation, the interchange of arts, the communal use of sciences; it consists also in the evolution of the religious consciousness of man toward the absolute truth. In that evolution all religions make their contributions, and each, perchance, may give something that is necessary to the fulness of truth. The science of religion takes note of the evolutionary significance of every form of faith, and attempts to estimate its approximation to the absolute truth by its religious value in view of the requirements and possibilities of the spirit of man.

But we must go one step farther in estimating the motives that impart to the new science of religion its rever-

ence and its tenderness. To say that a sense of the oneness of the race of man has become a living force in the study of religion, and that the history of religion now is looked upon as an evolutionary process whereby the various branches of the human family have contributed to the sum of man's aspiration toward God, is not to exhaust the reasons why the modern science of religion is, in its best manifestations, full of the notes of brotherhood and of reverence for the convictions of others. One other reason should be cited. Many of the noblest minds of our time are gaining a new view of the origin of religion. When we use the phrase "the origin of religion," we may mean one of two things: its historical beginning as an element in the evolution of the race, or its psychological source, its fountain and origin in the nature of man. I use the phrase in the latter sense, and this use will, I am sure, commend itself to my learned Indian hearers; for all philosophical minds have a common interest in every attempt to determine the source, within ourselves, whence spring the religious aspirations and beliefs of man.

It is impossible to satisfy thinkers of our time with the view that gained ascendency in France and England in the eighteenth century, that religion is the product of a system of fables and superstitions imposed upon man by priests acting from motives of self-interest. We can understand how from time to time philosophy has revolted from scholasticism and ecclesiasticism, asserting its right to think for itself; and how such men as Benedict Spinoza[1] and John Toland,[2] Europeans of the seventeenth century, themselves deeply religious, could, by their impassioned repudiations of priestcraft, encourage in their successors

[1] SPINOZA, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (ed. London, 1862), pp. 19–25.

[2] TOLAND, *Christianity Not Mysterious* (London, 1696), pp. 3–30, 158–176.

the anti-religious spirit that may be said to culminate in Voltaire. But, whatever our opinions about sacerdotalism may be, as students of the psychology of human life we know that priests are, not the creators, but the products of religion; that "religion is older than any form of priesthood;"[1] and that the source of religion is not outside of us, but within ourselves. Nor can the thinker of today be satisfied with the attempt to account for religion upon the theory of a primitive revelation made to man. For not only is evidence of such a primitive revelation inaccessible, but the possibility of man's receiving and appropriating it, if it were given, seems to call for the presence, within himself, antecedently, of qualifications that must be essentially religious. A religious revelation could possess no meaning for a non-religious being. Before a God can reveal his mind and will to man, man must be endowed with power to apprehend the thing revealed, and that power is religion. I need not say, that I believe in divine revelation, oral and written, and that that belief conditions all that I shall present in these lectures; but I look in vain to that source for the spring of religion in man. That spring must be within himself.[2]

Disregarding the theories of priestly invention and primitive revelation, modern thought has sought for that in man himself which could account psychologically for the great fact of religion. And in this search it has explored many lines. Some have attempted to find the well-spring of religion in the disposition of primitive peoples to connect the presence of spirits with certain natural objects, as trees, stones, streams, or with certain natural phenomena, as lightning, wind, and rain; attribut-

1 Jastrow, *The Study of Religion*, p. 180.

2 *Cf.* Fairbairn, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History* (London, 1876), pp. 13, 14.

ing to emotions of terror, astonishment, or admiration, excited by those objects, the genesis of feelings afterwards evolved into the religious conceptions of civilised peoples.[1] Others, reflecting upon the obvious mystery of death, and the removal of beloved or honoured personages from the visible world, have sought to show that in the worship of ancestors and the belief in ghosts we find the spring of that disposition to yearn toward the unseen and to be influenced by the unseen which grows ultimately into the experience of religion.[2] Still others, regarding religion as an illusion, have claimed that it arises from man's consciousness of his own weakness, as he finds himself surrounded by the incalculable powers of nature. Overwhelmed by forces that disclose to him, through contrast, his own insignificance, he makes a blind and gloomy effort to propitiate those forces.[3] And others, rising to a higher ground, hold that we should look for the well-spring of religion, not in its most base and primitive forms, but in its maturest forms. They claim that the germinative principle of religion most clearly will disclose itself in the highest religion, even as we understand humanity best by studying the full-grown man rather than the undeveloped infant.[4] Upon this theory the psychological source of religion is very noble. It is not man's disposition to people woods and fields with spirits; it is not the worship of ancestral ghosts; it is not the pessimistic struggle with the insuperable powers of nature. It is that which is most godlike in the soul of man, the perception of the Infinite, the yearning after the boundless, uncreated Mind

[1] *Cf.* throughout, for a theory of animism, TYLOR's elaborate work, *Primitive Culture* (2 vols., London, 1903).

[2] *Cf.* SPENCER, *Principles of Sociology, in loco.*

[3] *Cf* HARTMANN, *Das Religiöse, etc.*, p. 27.

[4] For a fine discussion of this idea *cf.* CAIRD; *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Lect. 2.

that inhabiteth eternity. When I mention the earliest and chiefest of the modern scientific apologists of this theory of the psychological well-spring of religion, I name one for whom I believe all learned Indians entertain feelings of respect and friendship, the late Professor Friedrich Max Müller, of Oxford. It was his contention, maintained to the end of his long life of research, that the perception of the Infinite can be shown by historical evidence to have been the one element shared in common by all religions; beginning in the lower forms with the simple negation of what is finite, and the assertion of an invisible beyond, and leading up to a perceptive belief in that most real Infinite in which we live and move and have our being. To use his own words: "The source of all religion in the human heart is the perception of the Infinite, the yearning of the soul after God."[1]

As men accustomed to ponder this mystery of religion which we perceive to exist within ourselves, I feel that I carry your approval with me when I affirm that a phenomenon so great in itself, so universal in its scope, cannot have originated in dreams, or in fears, or even in reverence for the dead.

Such causes, however worthy in themselves, are inadequate to produce a result that binds together all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues in the brotherhood of a common experience, which, in its multifarious forms of expression, has been the most potent of all influences in shaping the world's history. I believe that you will give your assent to these affecting words concerning the origin of religion in the heart of man, spoken, in 1878, by one of the greatest of European scholars, Tiele, of Leyden: "Can dreams have given rise to that faith which

[1] *Cf.* MAX MÜLLER, *Theosophy, or Psychological Religion* (Gifford Lectures, 1892), pp. 7, 480.

has proved so stupendous a power in the world's history, or to those hopes which have sustained millions of our fellow-men amidst terrible sufferings, and lightened their eyes in the agony of death? Some people may answer in the affirmative. But it is certainly not these imaginings that give rise to religion. The process is the very reverse. It is man's original, unconscious, innate sense of infinity that gives rise to his first stammering utterances of that sense, and to all his beautiful dreams of the past and the future. These utterances and these dreams may have long since passed away, but the sense of infinity from which they proceed remains a constant quantity. It is inherent in the human soul. It lies at the root of man's whole spiritual life."[1]

This view of the origin of religion compels us to advance one step farther, even to the question: Whence this "original, unconscious, innate sense of infinity"? Whence this yearning after God which we share in common, "whate'er our name or sign"? Can there be any answer save one to a question so august? Our sense of the infinite is *from* the Infinite. Our yearning for God is *from* God, His Spirit in ourselves; for we are His offspring. As, in our noblest human fellowships, heart answers unto heart, sensation and emotion travelling along the lines of our common humanity, so, in our involuntary desires toward Deity (in whatsoever terms we may define our conceptions of Deity), aspirations and yearnings go forth upon the currents of a divine life within ourselves, inbreathed from the infinite Source of life.

These are the grounds upon which the science of religion may be said to rest; these the considerations that, for many of the western scholars, have added to its academi-

[1] *Cf.* Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 233.

cal and critical interest a deep reverence and a most human tenderness. The sense of the unity of mankind has become a positive force, tending to bridge the old chasms between nations. The conception of the evolutionary process in history has broken the old tyranny of bigotry and has gained for every form of faith the right seriously to be studied. Above all, the better understanding of what religion is in its psychological origin, even the stirring within the heart of man of infinite yearnings, begotten in him through the Spirit of the Infinite, has made it possible for the adherents of faiths that once fought each other with the sword to meet in affectionate communion, and to examine, without bitterness or rivalry, whatever, to one or the other, may seem most precious for himself and most helpful for his brother-man.

It is upon these grounds that I invite you to enter upon the study of a religion, and to do this in the modern spirit and from the modern point of view. If the scope and the spirit of the Barrows Lectureship were less broad and less irenic than they are understood to be, it would not cause surprise if so direct an invitation to study the salient points of the Christian religion were met with coldness. Nor would it be difficult for learned Hindus to defend that coldness with weighty arguments. For from the past, from the present, and from the future emerge, at the call of Hinduism, arguments that appear to justify indifference, if not hostility, toward the religion which bears the name of Christ.

From the past comes the argument of superior antiquity. The religion of the New Testament is relatively young, as it stands beneath the Syrian sky of the first century, distrusted and despised by the Judaism from which it was evolved; ignored by the Greek and the Latin

culture to which, soon and vitally, it was to be related; unknown and undreamed of by the Aryan faiths of India, which even then were hoary with age and opulent with tradition. In the biography of the Founder of Christianity is recorded a touching episode of His childhood. His parents had brought Him, then a boy of twelve, from their home in the northern province, Galilee, to Jerusalem, in the southern province, Judæa, that they might attend the annual religious festival of the Passover. That duty done, they joined the train of pilgrims returning to the north, only to find that their son was missing. Distressed they sought Him everywhere, turning back to the Holy City. And there, within the portico of the temple, they found their son, His slight boyish figure the centre of a group of venerable doctors of the law; His guileless face in strange contrast with the grave countenances of those who heard, astonished, the voice of wisdom proceeding from the lips of infancy. Even so stands the religion of Jesus Christ in the portico of history, its guileless youth surrounded by the older faiths of mankind. It bears upon itself that strange, sweet dignity that sometimes sits upon the brow of childhood; that unblemished charm of purity, that unstudied prescience of destiny, that divine intuition of wisdom. It attracts the scrutiny, even though it fail to win the confidence, of more ancient religions. Yet one cannot wonder if those ancient faiths withdraw in coldness from this that stands in the garments of youth amid the solemn shadows of antiquity.

From the present comes an argument even more potent to justify the oriental mind in cold withdrawal from the study of Christianity. It is the argument of East against West, of Asia against Europe; it is the strained relations

of oriental institutions, social, civil, religious, political, the offspring of immemorial custom and tendency, toward a faith that has rooted itself in the soil of western life and entwined its tendrils around western usage, sentiment, and belief, until it has become identified with the West; and any attempt to commend it to the consideration of Asiatic minds may be construed as an effort to exploit a product of western civilisation. The nations of the West for the most part have embraced Christianity. They have saturated it with the genius, built up around it the institutions, fastened upon it the local names and signs, loaded it with the customs, armed it with the weapons, of the western world. Europe has Europeanised the religion of Christ, until he who looks at it from the outside may be pardoned for failing to see the force of its claim to be more than an ethnic cult. Until it can be shown that western Christianity is but a local adaptation of that which in essence is not western, nor eastern, but for whomsoever can receive it, it cannot be wondered at that an oriental to whom the manners and spirit of the West are in part inexplicable, in part irritating, should say coldly to Christianity: "What have I to do with thee?"

From the future emerges, at the call of Hinduism, an argument for indifference toward the faith that bears the name of Christ. It is the assumption that the philosophical basis of Christianity and the philosophical basis of Hinduism are and ever must remain mutually subversive; that, in respect of the fundamental conceptions of God and the soul, the Christian and the disciples of Hindu philosophical systems never can approach any common standing-ground, whereon discussion may become intelligible. It is assumed that, in the nature of

the case, a basis for mutuality and fraternal contemplation of Christian ideas is unattainable; that the categories of thought are unrelated; that those ideas which are most ultimate and fixed in the philosophy of Christianity are precisely the ones which in the philosophy of the Vedantist, for example, ever must be most thoroughly disapproved and rejected; that the terms in which self thinks of self within the lines of the most serious Christian philosophy ever must be more empty than the vacant air, more meaningless than the chatter of birds in the ear of him who *is Brahma.*

Believe me that I do not underestimate the gravity of these considerations, each one of which gives rise to serious reflections. It is true that Christianity, among the religious systems that have controlled large sections of the human race, is the youngest of all, Mohammedanism alone being excepted. It is true that the thought and life of the West, having adopted the religion of Christ from a very early date, have developed local adaptations of its belief and its practices that are essentially western; adaptations that have so modified Christianity, stamping it with the European hall-mark, as to make it difficult for the oriental mind to realise that the historic origin of Christianity is Asiatic and not European. It is true that the philosophical basis of Hinduism, its deepest presupposition concerning each of the three germinal conceptions, God, the World and Self, appears to be wholly incompatible with and wholly subversive of the corresponding conception as set forth in the popular and conventional presentations of the Christian religion. These are very serious considerations. And I can conceive that, under certain circumstances, these considerations might suffice to close the ear of eastern culture

against Christian argument, and to avert the oriental face in cold disdain from one offering those arguments.

But I apprehend no such unfavourable issue under the present circumstances. And this for reasons political, religious, personal. I come, not as a European, but as an American. Even as the faith in which I am a believer stands among the older faiths of mankind as the fair young Christ among the venerable doctors in the temple, so stands the nation that I represent, in the freshness of its happy youth, among the elder and more heavily encumbered nations of the world; and I think that I may affirm the relations of America to India to have been never political, never governmental; always fraternal, sympathetic, respectful. Again, I come not as a churchman, representing any one of the ecclesiastical divisions of Christendom, or seeking to promote the advance of some western modification of the Christian idea, in authority and influence over Indian life. I come as the representative of a University that, itself a seeker after truth, honours all engaged in that quest, and that conceives nothing to be more worthy of intelligent minds than dispassionate comparison of ideas touching the highest of all subjects, the profoundest of all mysteries —God, the World, and the Soul. Finally, I come not with the presumptuous belief that you are unacquainted with the main positions of my religion. I do not forget that India is the age-long home of religious study, and that Christianity in some of its forms was known in India before the discovery of America. Nor do I come as a controversialist, eager to assail the beliefs of others and to plant the standard of conquest upon their ruins. Farther than East from West is the ambition of controversy from my heart. I come in the spirit of peace, of gentleness, of humility, to tell you what

the religion of Christ means to one of the humblest of his disciples; to point out to you what that religion is, in its pure, unadulterated essence, whensoever one will venture past the barriers of custom, of conventionality, of dogmatic controversy, which have been built up by human authority or human prejudice, and walk with Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, in the calm, sweet garden of His own truth.

My chief ambition is that, by the exercise of mutual confidence and through the medium of intellectual fellowship, we shall lift this discussion to a high level; even to a plane where we can examine Christianity upon its merits and view it in its essence, undisturbed by those historic modifications and those local side issues which have opened, in West and East alike, questions painful, perplexing, and unprofitable.

If this end is to be reached, even the calm, intelligent discussion of some leading principles of Christian belief, a certain mental attitude is desirable on the part, not only of the lecturer, but of those to whom he speaks. With confiding frankness the lecturer already has disclosed his own mental attitude. He has pointed out that it is non-controversial, irenic, full of respect for the convictions of those whom he addresses. May he be permitted now to describe what, in his judgment, should be the mental attitude of those who, trained under other systems of belief and holding with more or less tenacity to those systems, do yet recognise, as persons of intelligence, that the Christian religion is a considerable factor in the world's history, and do desire, from an intellectual point of view, to perceive more clearly what there is in Christianity that has won not only the assent, but the passionate devotion, of many individuals of undoubted spiritual and philosophical power.

There may, with reason, be asked of those oriental hearers who would lift this discussion to that high level where Christianity may be considered upon its merits, a mental attitude that shall consist chiefly in three undertakings; namely, an intellectual elimination, an historical retrospect, a philosophical adjustment. With a brief yet careful setting forth of these elements of a desirable mental attitude for the study of Christianity I shall beg leave to close my first, and introductory, lecture.

For the eastern student of religion who consents to examine Christianity upon its merits, it is essential that he make certain intellectual eliminations; that is to say, he must expel from his mind and dismiss from his religious problem certain considerations that are wont to insinuate themselves into all oriental study of the Christian religion and to vitiate the conclusions of the student. These considerations are political—the entanglement of Christianity with civil and military powers of government; ecclesiastical—the entanglement of Christianity with the sectarian disputes of Christians; ethical—the entanglement of Christianity with the moral unworthiness of many of its nominal representatives. For purposes of investigation into the essence of the Christian religion these intellectual eliminations are necessary.

To the student of history it is obvious that the civil and military systems of so-called Christian nations must not be confused with the spiritual content of that religion whose most holy precepts and most commanding ideals often have been set aside or profaned by the pride, or the ambition, or the greed of governing powers. When the sacred Person of Christ appeared on earth, He stood alone in the midst of civil and military powers; identified with none, despised by some, superior to all. Around Him He

gathered a group of apostles, spirits kindred with His own — a little flock, as sheep in the midst of wolves. For the early centuries of the Christian religion there was in store only persecution at the hands of the state. The disciples of Christ, like their Master, who Himself was put to death by the act of military government, had not where to lay their heads. They were accounted as the offscouring of the earth. It was not until the fourth century that an imperial hand conferred upon Christianity the doubtful boon of royal favour, spread over it the pallium of august protection, made it a religion of the state, and opened those long, complex, and conflicting annals of European history wherein governments have warred against one another in the common name of Christ, and have invoked that name to adorn the beneficent policies of civilisation or to justify the stern necessities of conquest.

But the relation of civil and military government to Christianity, whether just or unjust, admirable or despicable, is an irrelevant matter for him who, as a student of religion, passing far within the sanctuary of meditation, contemplates the essential sacredness of that on which the unhallowed hand of worldly power has fallen. He forgets, he eliminates from the mind, the efforts of ambition to make use of Christianity for it's own selfish ends. He passes by thrones and republics, senates and armies, tyrannies and revenges, marking the tortuous course of history in the West; he averts the mind from the thunder of battle, and the cries of the dying, and the garments of the warrior rolled in blood, on fields where sword crossed sword in the name of Him who was called the Prince of Peace; he leaves the trampled fields of Europe for Europeans to explore; and in the olive groves of Palestine he questions Him at whose cradle the eastern sages wor-

shipped, but through whose broken heart the Roman thrust a spear: What meanest Thou, O Teacher, when Thou sayest: I am the Light of the world: He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life?

There is also an ecclesiastical elimination to be made by the eastern student of religion, who consents to examine Christianity upon its merits. Christianity must be disentangled from the sectarian disputes of Christians. That great religions give rise to great discussions is a truth that exalts, not discredits, the dignity of human beliefs. A religion whose leading ideas were so axiomatic as to arouse no discussion would be discredited by its own pettiness. The various philosophical schools of Hinduism, the sects of Islam, are intellectual evidences of the importance of the ideas under consideration. That Christianity both in the Eastern Church and in the Western Church should chart its painful course by controversial landmarks, and should complicate its original simplicity with sectarian subdivisions, was a psychological necessity common to great religions. Whether the net result of these subdivisions has been wholesome for western Christianity is an open question. Some deplore them openly, interpreting catholicity as uniformity, denouncing each great division that has occurred in the ecclesiastical evolution of Europe as a sinful defection from the primitive truth, persistence in which state of separation is held to be perpetual injury to the good name of Christ's religion. Others view the matter differently, agreeing more or less closely with one who lately has said:[1] "The formation of sects within a religion, while in one sense a disintegrating process, is, in another, a manifestation of vitality and of

[1] JASTROW, *The Study of Religion*, p. 61.

healthful growth, quite as much as the growth of a city is indicated by the opening up of new streets and byways. A religion without sects is necessarily limited in its range; and so long as racial differences among nations exist, with variations in temperament, the same religion in various geographical centres is bound to take on various forms." But the oriental in quest of the essential ideas of Christianity need not concern himself with controversies that divide the West, save as those controversies attest the vitality of religious thought in Europe, and prove that a religion cradled on Asiatic soil and nurtured by Semitic influences has had power for two thousand years to affect and to agitate down to its foundations the entire structure of Aryan life throughout the western hemisphere. Should Christianity ever attract India as it has attracted Europe, the inherent immensity of its conceptions will evolve controversies suited to the eastern points of view; and will disturb Asiatic society with that majestic unrest which, like the heaving of the ocean, reveals the greatness of the disturbing power. The restless movements of religious controversy, like the swaying branches of the forest, announce the presence of a mighty force pressing upon them. He who would know the essence of Christianity must forget the swaying branches of controversy, and ask of the viewless wind that moves them: Whence art thou, O wind of God, and whither dost thou go?

Beyond the political elimination which disentangles Christianity from civil and military governments, and beyond the ecclesiastical elimination which extricates the essence of religion from the discussions and disputes that arise about it, the eastern student of the faith of Christ must make also an ethical elimination, separating Christianity from the moral unworthiness of some of its nominal

representatives. Often has it been said that the Christian religion has suffered more at the hands of its professed followers than at the hands of its avowed enemies. In a sense that is true. Christ was betrayed by one of His own disciples; and from that time onward His religion has been subject to misrepresentation through the folly, the carelessness, the selfishness, or the baseness of those who, conventionally, were related to His cause. But to refuse to study the essential content of the religion of Christ because one, nominally His disciple, had shown moral unworthiness, is like refusing to make use of gold and silver because a base counterfeit coin has been thrust upon one by fraud. The philosophical method is to ignore the ethical deformity that garbs itself in the garment of religion; to press past the feebleness, the distortion, the poverty of ideal, the earthbound sordidness, the hypocritical profession, the vapid formalism, that obstruct like weeds and underbrush the approaches to the Heavenly Mount; and to climb to that high level where, transfigured in love and light, He stands who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person. Judge Christianity not by the poor and perishable types that profess connection with it and belie its spirit. Judge Christianity by Christ, its incarnate Archetype, and by those rarest souls who, greater than all the churchly names they bore, have possessed His spirit, have followed in His train. And why? Because Christ is not European and Christianity is no product of the West. The West is seeking, indeed, to comprehend it; the West is climbing, though with piteous stumblings and fallings back, toward the Heavenly Mount. But Christ towers above European civilisation as the highest peak of the Himalayas towers above the cities of the river plains; a white Perfection that rivets the eyes of the world; a bright Epiphany of perfect love.

Such is the threefold intellectual elimination which should be made by each oriental mind that may desire to examine Christianity upon its merits; the essence of the religion must be disentangled from the acts of civil and military governments adopting the official name of Christian, from the inevitable controversies that follow in the train of all germinal ideas, and from the unworthiness of those whose nominal connection with Christianity has been one of its most stubborn embarrassments.

In addition to this intellectual elimination, he who, as an oriental, would acquire the mental attitude suited to the contemplation of Christianity, must seek to attain it by a certain historical retrospect. It is related in one of the gospels that a certain man "sought to see Jesus who He was, and could not for the crowd." Unwilling to be baffled, he climbed into a tree and gained, over all intervening obstructions, clear vision of the face of Christ. Like him must the eastern student of religion, who would see Christianity in its essence, elevate himself above the crowd of intervening objects and look back upon its historic evolution, as it relates itself to the genealogy of races. It is impracticable, under the time limitations of these lectures, to enter the wide, alluring field of research connected with the origin of races. But it is equally impossible to advert, however briefly, to the historical antecedents of Christianity without mentioning two race-names that stand related thereto, mysteriously, in the annals of thought—the Aryan and the Semite. The Aryan, when all modifications of time, separation, and race-absorption are taken into account, yet remains the common ancestor of Indian and European. To be reminded of that common ancestry may or may not be agreeable to modern Hindus. For myself, as a man of Aryan blood, I

welcome whatever assures to me the honour of kinship with India. Nevertheless, it is fanciful and speculative to press too strongly the identity of Indo-European peoples today, even though Ihering be right when he says: "The Hindu and the European of today differ greatly, and yet they are children of one and the same mother, twin brothers who originally were exactly alike."[1] Where was the cradle of our common ancestry, is a problem that forever fascinates and forever may elude the search of those to whom the secrets of the past are precious. Site after site has been affirmed, only to be denied by later students. The theory of central Asia[2] as the primitive home has given place, under the pressure of results in the study of language and culture, to the theory of the steppes of eastern Europe; yet even those most devoted to the quest speak cautiously of those results. "How the proposed hypothesis," says Schrader, "as to the original home of the Indo-European will be affected by anthropology, when its results have been sifted as we may expect them to be; how it will be affected by the discovery of the prehistoric remains, when the treasures concealed in the soil of south Russia have been fully brought to light and thoroughly examined, remains to be seen."[3] Nevertheless, though the place of the cradle be obscured amidst the mists of antiquity, the diverging paths of the children issuing therefrom still may be traced. Eastward, to some second home where evolved the splendid life and literature of primitive Hinduism and Zoroastrianism, proceeded the Indo-Iranian branches of the Aryan stock, to divide again, and pass,

[1] Rudolph von Ihering, *Evolution of the Aryan* (English translation, 1897), Introduction, p. 20.

[2] *Cf.* M. Müller's *Lectures*, Vol. I, pp. 239 ff.; Sayce, *Principles*, pp. 101 and many others.

[3] *Cf.* O. Schrader, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte* (Jena, 1883); English title, *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples* (London, 1890), p. 443.

one of them as a nation of shepherds and sun-worshippers to the mountain ranges of Persia, the other as a nation of poets and philosophers, epic-bearers and conquerors, through the passes of the Northwest Hills into the illimitable plains and plateaux of Hindustan. Westward, toward the Carpathians, the Danube, and the sea, to their second home upon the priceless black earth where now wave the richest grain fields of Europe[1] proceeded the forerunners of Greek and Latin, Teuton, Celt, and Slav, to evolve their characteristic types of culture, and to break again into groups that wandered and settled from the North Sea to the Mediterranean.

But not from the eastern branch and not from the western branch sprang that faith which bears the name and superscription of Jesus Christ. In the ancient Hebrew book of Job occurs a passage describing the search for the origin of wisdom. "Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me." So shall he be answered who seeks the genesis of Christianity amidst the traditions of the Aryan race. From India, the breeding-ground of mighty faiths, returns the answer: "It is not in me." From Europe, the fertile home of western culture, comes the echo: "It is not with me." If, on the one hand, the Indian refuses to be responsible for a religion whose philosophical basis appears to violate every canon of his thought; on the other hand, the European who owes to that religion all that makes his civilisation substantial, his culture progressive, his life worth living, cannot claim the honour of reckoning among his ancestral distinctions the genesis of Christianity from the Aryan stock.

[1] *Cf.* SCHRADER, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

Like the voice of one crying in the wilderness, emerging from scenes as far from the civilisation of Europe as from the thought of India, comes the message of Christianity, borne by that mysterious branch of another race, the Jews of Palestine, at once the most distinguished and the most afflicted members of the Semitic family. Far different from the primitive home of the Aryans was that which the predominant opinion of modern scholars[1] designates as the starting-point of the race that in its southern branches retained and still retains marks of the stern exclusiveness implanted within it by the peculiar conditions of desert life.[2]

If the Arabian desert be the cradle of the Semites, we find in the austerity of its seclusion the clue to the ethnic loneliness, and also to the inclination toward an awe-inspiring monotheism, that grew with the growth of that sublimest offspring of the Semitic stock, the Hebrew nation. Well has it been said by my distinguished predecessor in the Barrows Lectureship, Principal Fairbairn of Mansfield College: "The Hebrews may stand as the highest example of the Semitic religious genius, especially in its creative form. They were as a nation always insignificant, indeed almost politically impotent. Their country was small, little larger at its best than a fourth of England. Their history was a perpetual struggle for national existence. Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome were successively either their masters or protectors, and their often threatened national existence was at last trampled out by the legions of Titus and Hadrian, and themselves sent to wander over the earth as a strange example of a destroyed nation, but an inde-

1 *Cf.* W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 10.

2 *Cf.* G. A. Barton, *A Sketch of Semitic Origins* (1902), p. 28.

structible people. Without the commercial or colonising energy of their Phœnician kinsmen; without the architectural genius and patient industry which built the monuments and cities of Egypt; without the ambition and courage which raised their Assyrian brethren to empire and a sovereign civilisation; without the poetic and speculative genius of the Greeks; without the martial and political capacity of the Romans, the politically unimportant and despised Hebrews have excelled these gifted nations, singly and combined, in religious faculty and in the power exercised through religion on mankind."[1]

In the light of this historical retrospect it is obvious that the oriental who would see the essence of Christianity must elevate himself above the intervening structures of European ecclesiasticism and dogmatism that crowd the foreground and interrupt the view. He must look to another race than that whence himself and the European sprang; he must rid his mind of the irritating thought that some crude theological product of the modern West is being offered in competition with the venerable unfoldings of Brahmanism. He must look to Asia, the land of his own origin. He must look to the Semite, an ancestry as ancient as his own, to discern the source whence came those conceptions of God, the world, and the soul which, ascending through the various stages in the evolution of Hebrew thought, find expression, interpretation, verification, and completion in Christ.

And yet, though I remind you that the antecedents of Christianity are Semitic, as an Aryan myself I would not have you think of Christianity as the mere outcome and conclusion of Judaism. A much broader view should be taken. While, on the one hand Christianity is no

[1] *Cf.* A. M. Fairbairn, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History* (1876).

suddenly conceived system, no unpremeditated religion, but "the ripe fruit of the historical development of humanity, and especially of the people of Israel,"[1] it is utterly impossible to explain the scope and range of leading Christian ideas by limiting our account of the genesis of Christianity to its Jewish inheritance. For, as our study of those ideas advances, I shall hope to show you that the essence of Christianity embodies, unifies, and co-ordinates, with conceptions that are evolved from Judaism, other conceptions that are most dear to Aryan minds, and most essential to the Aryan intuition of the nature of God.[2]

I shall try to show you that all of these ideas—those that come of the lineage of Semitic thought, those that are as the very breath of life to the Aryan self-consciousness—meet and mingle in Christ. I shall try to show you upon what grounds I believe that Christ is universal; appearing, indeed, as the Child of a Semitic mother, and the fruition of a Semitic hope, but revealing, in His high prerogative of Divine Sonship, truth larger than Jew could comprehend, truth that in its immensity of scope, its reconciling power, its infinite adaptation to human requirements is only now, at the dawn of the twentieth century, beginning to be realised, even by its hereditary champions.

I beg leave to close this lecture by calling your attention to the third and final element in the mental attitude of the cultured oriental who would examine the essence of Christian belief. I have adverted to the intellectual eliminations that should be made, touching matters associated with Christianity, yet irrelevant thereto; I have pointed

[1] *Cf.* PFLEIDERER, *Philosophy and Development of Religion* (1894), Vol. II, p. 38.

[2] *Cf.* TIELE, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, Vol. I, pp. 150-81; *cf.* BUDDE, *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, p. 218.

out the historical retrospect whereby the Semitic origin of this faith is seen. I would speak in closing of the philosophical adjustment that should be undertaken by all orientals, and especially by Hindus, who may be interested in the study of Christianity sufficiently to wish to know what inspirations it offers, what consolations it affords, to minds that certainly cannot be called superstitious, bigoted, or ignorant.

It is after reflection that I use the expression "philosophical adjustment." By no means would I use the words *philosophical surrender*. Such an expression, under the circumstances, would appear to be particularly infelicitous, if not offensive. It would imply, on the one hand, that I have the rashness to ask minds that have inherited thousands of years of philosophical reflection upon the problems of the universe, and that have confronted those problems in a certain attitude, to surrender that inheritance and to abandon that attitude. I trust that I am incapable of such rashness and that I am above the unintelligence that could deem it possible for serious minds to shift, at will, the deep foundations of thought.

And, on the other hand, to ask of you philosophical surrender would seem to imply that I look upon Christianity as the product of western philosophy, and that in order to comprehend Christianity, the learned East must stultify itself and trample its traditions in the dust. To admit this on my part would be to abandon the deepest and dearest interest that brings me to India. I come to India because I believe that Christianity is not the product of western philosophy, but is something greater and far more important. I come to India because I believe that some of your purest and loftiest philosophical presuppositions and some of the purest and loftiest philo-

sophical pre-suppositions of the West are like two mighty rivers bending toward one another from the eternal hills in which are the springs of both, rivers that may meet, converge, and flow onward, in one broader channel toward the sea.

Therefore what I suggest is not philosophical surrender, but philosophical adjustment. The connotation of this term may be shown by an illustration. Many years ago an English novelist, writing on the labour question, and desiring to promote among possessors of capital a better understanding of the point of view of champions of labour, gave to his book the title: *Put Yourself in His Place.* The phrase serves my purpose as suggesting in the present connection a philosophical attitude. The Indian philosophy, having evolved along a course uninfluenced by West Asian and European thought,[1] naturally assumes that it has nothing in common with the philosophical postulates of the Christian religion. Its chance contacts with those who speak the message of Christianity without reference to its philosophical postulates may confirm the assumption that this great faith of the West, with its accent on objective personality, and reality of conduct, and the value of experience, is as the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal to minds consecrated to the majestic idealism of the Upanishads, and to the swallowing up of merit and demerit in that transcendent knowledge which reveals to the enlightened the fundamental identity of the individual soul with the highest Brahma.[2]

This attitude of intellectual disdain, however natural, precludes the possibility of an intelligible discussion of

[1] *Cf.* DEUSSEN, "Outlines of Indian Philosophy," *Indian Antiquary* (December, 1900), Parts I and II.

[2] *Cf.* THIBAUT, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXXIX, Introduction, pp. xxiv-xxvii.

Christianity. There remains no basis on which to found such discussion. There are no common terms that may be employed for the exchange of ideas.

My suggestion, therefore, is philosophical adjustment of the kind indicated by the felicitous title of the English novel, *Put Yourself in His Place.* Such adjustment should be mutual. The mind that inherits the complex European philosophy, to the development of which Semitic, Zoroastrian, and Grecian forces have contributed,[1] ought to put itself in sympathetic relation with the germinal thoughts of the Vedanta-Sutras. The mind that has gained its training and its point of view altogether from oriental sources should turn itself without prejudice to the exponent of Christianity, with sincere disposition to know what he means and whereon he founds his meaning.

Such philosophical adjustment in our present discussion I suggest in a loving and respectful spirit. It is to be commended to the thoughtful on many grounds, but especially on these grounds:

It involves no stultifying surrender of one's intellectual inheritances. He who thus puts himself philosophically in the place of another, representing a foreign school of thought, commits no treachery against his religious or scholastic ancestry; shows no base ingratitude toward departed seers who, loving their race and their country better than life, toiled over the problems of destiny and committed to succeeding generations the fruits of their labours.

Again, this philosophical adjustment implies no hasty self-commitment to the truth of that which is presented by another. The attitude proposed is judicial, delibera-

[1] *Cf.* DEUSSEN, *Indian Antiquary* (December, 1900), Part I.

tive, open-minded; it is willing to inspect the foundation of another's thought; to see, as through another's eyes, the meaning of life to him; to feel, as with another's heart, the value of that which, for him, is the truth concerning God and the soul. After one has done this, there remains undiminished one's power to reject, or to condemn.

Finally: this philosophical adjustment, mutual and friendly, is to be commended because it is worthy of the unity of the race of mankind. After all is said and done, it remains that we are men, born of woman, born into one world. Whatever the problems of our pre-existence may have been, whatever the problems of our future estate, disembodied or re-incarnate, may be, here for a season we stand together, the same sun lighting our day, the same stars tempering our night; and birth, and growth, and love, and sorrow, and death our common discipline in the school of life. We can afford to open our hearts to one another; to trust each other with the secrets of our faith as we ascend toward the Infinite; to look with kind eyes into each other's souls.

In such a spirit may we approach this study of Christianity which I have conceived in love and would utter with humility; on such a basis of mutual honour and confidence may we stand together and commune of Him in whom, by whatsoever name we call Him, through whatsoever veils we see Him, we live and move and have our being.

## SECOND LECTURE

### THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD AND ITS RELATION TO EXPERIENCE

In opening my second lecture, the theme of which is "The Christian Idea of God and Its Relation to Experience," I shall venture to remind you of the mental attitude that, by virtue of the friendly understanding existing between us, I am permitted to attribute to my learned hearers. It is assumed to contain three elements: an intellectual elimination, an historical retrospect, a philosophical adjustment. The intellectual elimination fulfils itself through the dismissal from your minds, as irrelevant to our present discussion, of these considerations: that Christianity is less ancient than the Aryan faiths of India; that in Europe, Christianity has contracted entangling relations with civil and military government; and that wherever, throughout the world, nominally Christian communities exist, they contain a proportion of individuals morally discreditable. These considerations, however true in themselves, have no bearing upon the present discussion. The historical retrospect implies your observance of the fact that the Christian religion springs not from European, but Asiatic, soil—a product of Eastern, not Western, culture; and that, while it owes its full development to the contributions made by Aryan philosophy and Aryan theism, it is in essence an outcome from that religiously eminent and politically unimportant people, the Hebrew branch of the Semitic stock. The philosophical adjustment implies sentiment rather than action; the kindly spirit that welcomes comparison of points of

view; the open mind that, upon broad human grounds, receives and ponders results attained by other seekers after God; the judicial temper that, scorning prejudice and passion, estimates religious values by the eternal standards of truth and righteousness.

It is not only easy, but delightful, to speak to minds adopting such an attitude toward that which, in the order of thought, must be our first subject of inquiry: the Christian idea of God and its relation to experience. By many chief thinkers of the western world the idea of God is esteemed to be the ultimate end and goal of knowledge.[1] Thought in its evolution has passed through stages, wherein, for a season, other and narrower views have prevailed. The empirical philosophy, recognising experience as the only valid basis of action, seeks to limit the realities of knowledge to impressions and ideas; impressions being the fleeting, single contacts upon our senses of the separate phenomena of nature; ideas being the more or less clear remembrance of those impressions; and self being, not a single thing, but an infinite succession of impressions and of memories of those impressions. But if phenomena be all that man can know, it were vain, upon such a theory of knowledge, to seek a First Cause; vain even to consider cause as a reality. Causation, time, space, self, become fictions. Man must dismiss the disquieting dream of sounding the depths of philosophical problems; he must be content with observing, recording, and classifying the phenomena that every instant are impressing themselves upon that body of associated ideas which he calls himself. Under such a theory of existence the goal of knowledge becomes the world of phenomena in which we live, and the chief end of man

[1] *Cf.* Edward Caird, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Lecture VI.

is to catalogue facts, to compute the totals of experience, to heap up cognitions of individual existence, and to transmit the record of these impressions to those who, coming after him, must tread the paths that he has trodden, and prolong the weary pilgrimage through the desert of materialism.

He who desires to understand the Christian religion must realise that its fundamental postulate is the existence of a God who can be known; its crowning aspiration is to know that God aright. The chief end of Christianity is the knowledge of the Infinite One. "This is life eternal," says Christ, "that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."[1] Knowledge is the master-key that unlocks the mysteries of Christianity; the corner-stone on which the structure rests; the word that explains why Christianity exists. Christianity is not a school hedged about with technicality, for the study of abstruse theory and the subtle rivalry of dialectic; it is not a temple, fulfilling itself in its altar, its priesthood, and its ritual. Christianity is a path, open to the sky, the sunlight, and the wind of God's ungrudging love; free and unfenced that all may walk therein; a path that broadens as it climbs the mountain-side of truth; a path whose goal is the highest knowledge, even the knowledge of the Infinite One, in whom, and of whom, and by whom are all things.

I say this with a greater joy, because I believe that the same statement may be made concerning the highest goal of Hindu religious aspiration; and I welcome every point where cross the paths of earth's seekers after God. Are not these the words of Sankara in the introduction to his commentary on the Vedânta Sutras:

[1] St. John 17:3.

"The enquiry into Brahma has for its fruit eternal bliss; the highest aim of man is realised by the knowledge of the Brahma. The complete comprehension of Brahma is the highest end of man"?[1] Is it not also said in one of the Upanishads: "He who knows Brahma attains the highest"?[2] No intelligent mind, much more, no heart possessing the spirit of brotherhood, can be unmoved by this coincidence of view between the conception of a knowable Brahma proclaimed in the venerable Upanishads, and the harmonious voice of one of the greatest of the western religious teachers, himself now passed into the vision of the Infinite: "Reason, following in the wake of faith, grasps the great conception that the religious life is a life at once human and Divine—the conception that God is a self-revealing God; that the Infinite does not annul, but realises, Himself in the finite, and that the highest revelation of God is the life of God in the soul of man; and, on the other hand, that the finite rests on, and realises itself in, the Infinite; and that it is not the annihilation, but the realisation of our highest freedom, in every movement of our thought, in every pulsation of our will, to be the organ and expression of the mind and will of God."[3]

For those who hold in common that the Infinite One is knowable, and that the goal of religion is approached through the perfecting of that knowledge, a calm examination of Christianity is possible even though it should disclose philosophical and practical conclusions far removed from those of Hinduism. And if, as I proceed, that divergence shall appear more evident and more extensive, I may trust you still to follow the course of my

[1] *Adhyâya*, I, Pâda, I. [2] *Taittiriyaka-upanishad;* II, *valli;* 1, *anuvâka.*

[3] J. Caird, *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 54.

observations in the same spirit of love in which I shall utter them. If I have described Christianity as a path, broad and unfenced, free to all men, winding up the mountain-side of truth, may I not ask that we all, of whatsoever faith here present, walk together in friendly converse on that unfenced path for a while, even though you be constrained to turn back at the last? It is through such fellowship that the hearts of men are knit together, even while their minds may fail to attain intellectual consensus.

To say that the chief end of Christianity is knowledge of the Infinite One is to state the fundamental postulate of that religion in the interpretation of which I am now engaged. But such a statement of the chief end of Christianity must be defined farther before it can gain the form and colour and content that belong to the essential nature of Christian theism. One cannot understand what a Christian means by knowing God until the two ideas, God and human personality, are defined in the terms of Christian belief.

There are modes of interpreting the concepts God and human personality dissimilar in themselves and leading to conclusions variant, if not mutually incompatible. In illustration of this statement I shall indicate certain methods of interpreting the idea of God, and I shall attempt to point out the particulars in which apparently they fail, by important omissions, to present the fullness of content offered in that method of interpretation which is characteristic of Christianity.

The deistic or transcendent method of interpreting the idea of God shall engage our attention first. One problem of all monotheistic systems of belief is so to state the doctrine of God that justice shall be done, on

the one hand, to the conception of an Infinite Deity and on the other hand, to the reality of the world.[1] A pantheistic system escapes this problem by denying the reality of the world or by merging the world in the Infinite. Deism, instead of obliterating the distinction between God and the world accentuates it. It represents God to be an objective Person living apart from His world, transcending it and interested in it as the maker of a machine is interested in the fruit of his genius, or as a king is interested in governing his subjects. This involves a dualistic theory of the universe. On the one hand is God the Ruler, the King, the Mover of the world, seated as it were upon His throne. On the other hand, separate from God as the painting is separate from the artist, as the statue is separate from the sculptor, as the man in the street is separate from the king in the palace, is the vast system of nature. In the midst of the system of nature is man with his equipment of physical and intellectual powers, his freedom of choice, his distinct, inviolable individuality.

It is not difficult to see that such a method of interpreting the idea of God would have, for a certain class of minds, a desirable simplicity. The traditions of the human race have brought down to us from an immemorial past the conception of sovereignty expressed through a royal person elevated above his subjects by superior rank; separated from them by seclusion and the prerogative of the throne; demanding and receiving homage; swaying the destinies of millions. No tradition is more universal than the tradition of monarchy. Crowns, sceptres, palaces, are symbols that need no interpretation the world over. It is natural that ideas begotten of the tradition of royalty

[1] *Cf.* J. CAIRD, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 114.

should project themselves into the region of religious thought, and dominate the conception of God. The effect of those ideas upon a religious system is obvious. God becomes a name for a colossal King-Emperor whose palace is the heaven of heavens. There he lives in the seclusion of royalty; removed by resources of power from the frailty of human life. The world, created at the beginning by his command, survives only at his pleasure, and is like a trampled plain whereon the myriads of mankind appear, live their lives of struggle and sorrow, die, and pass to judgment amidst the shadows of the unknown.

The limitations of time forbid me to dwell upon the effects of this conception of God upon the religious life of man. The practical effects have been variable. Sometimes those who have held the extreme view of the transcendence of God have suffered the extinction of the religious life. God being separated from the world, the individual man became a fatalist coerced by the machinery of the natural order. Sometimes the effect of this conception of God has been a religious life of melancholy self-adjustment to the edicts of an absolute, unsympathetic ruler; together with a stern delight in self-torturing renunciation of a world conceived of as without God.

But, at the moment, we are more interested in the philosophical bearings of this idea of God, as separated by transcendence from the visible universe, than in its practical effects upon the religious life. I beg therefore to point out a reason why Christianity is unable to content itself with this view of God. Its fundamental fault is that it undertakes to draw a line separating what it conceives of as two independent realities: on the one hand, the reality of the finite; on the other hand, the reality of the infinite. On one side of the line it places a reality

which it conceives of as Not-God. The content of this reality is man—his thoughts, his powers, his whole personality, together with the innumerable separate objects and existences by which he is surrounded and which make up the world; this it calls the finite. On the other side of the line, separated from the finite, is a reality which it calls God, a Being complete in his own equipment of powers and qualities, who from an exalted station looks and acts upon the finite, and to whom the finite looks as to an existence altogether separate from itself. It is impossible for Christianity to be satisfied with this conception of God. It is a denial of the idea of infinity to set off from it by lines and bounds a region of independent existence which we call finite and to which we attribute a separate life, having equal reality with the life of the infinite, yet distinct from it. Such a separation is to limit infinity, which is a contradiction in terms; infinity being the unlimited. Christianity cannot lend itself to such confusion.

But I shall be asked: Has not Christianity already lent itself to this confusion? Is not the phraseology of the Bible essentially dualistic, presenting to the mind a view of God as sovereign Ruler, dwelling in the heavens, looking down upon man, and approached by man with a system of sacrifices and with forms of worship which at every point assume the reality of the finite as separate from the reality of the Infinite? With perfect frankness would I reply: It is true that the Hebrew Scriptures, intent on the development of the monotheistic conception, constantly present God in terms of transcendence, speaking of Him as the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity; whose pavilion is in the clouds, whose attitude toward man is that of the sovereign Ruler and Lawgiver. It is

true that the sanctuary of Israel had its Holy of Holies upon which this transcendent God was understood locally to manifest Himself in the cloud of glory. It is true that the ordinary language of Christian teaching and Christian prayer abounds in imagery and suggestions that imply a view of God as wholly transcendent; and it is true that the philosophy of the Christian religion exhibits stages of development wherein the separateness of human personality is accentuated in terms that may be interpreted as dualistic. But no Oriental should be betrayed into the error of interpreting the popular usages of Christian speech, wherein the finite continually is distinguished from the Infinite, as the endorsement of a philosophy that would shut God away from His world, and out of the lives of His children; that would make Him but an exaggerated and colossal representation of man; usurping the title, while lacking the essence, of the Infinite. It will appear, as we proceed, that while in the transcendence of God Christianity discerns a truth that must be conserved, a truth that deepens reverence and quickens worship, and that contributes an important element to the all-inclusive idea of the Infinite; yet the interpretation of that truth in terms that would set off the world from God as a region outside of and apart from His infinity is as repugnant to the Christian as it is to the pantheist.

We have viewed the theory of transcendence as an attempt to realise the Infinite by emphasising the difference in quality between finite and infinite, and by clothing the idea of God with associations derived from earthly conceptions of authority, royalty, and rank, that result in anthropomorphism; which is making a God who is but a magnified man.

From this we turn to another line along which man has sought to find his way to a satisfactory idea of the supreme Self; the reverse of that which seeks to describe, in terms borrowed from earthly relations, the nature and the attributes of God. It is the method of negation, seeking an undefinable Infinite through the elimination of those qualities and attributes that are suggested to man by his own self-consciousness. The objective point in the method of negation is the abstraction from the idea of God of all attributes, all qualities, all differences, until nothing is left for the mind to contemplate but pure being, without definition — the undefinable Absolute. This Infinite is without qualities; attributes or qualities conceived in connection with it are to be denied. We know only what it is not; and that unknowable resultant which remains after all that it is not has been stripped off, is the one, the only, the eternal Reality; the supreme Self, the illimitable Essence. In saying this I am not forgetting that it is not inconsistent with pantheistic doctrine so far to qualify the supreme Existence as to attribute to it intelligence (as opposed to that dullness or blindness which belongs to finite existence) and blessedness or joy (as opposed to all possible suffering). I recognise that these discriminations are made, and made with increased emphasis, by certain Indian thinkers of our time; yet, in the very making of them, the genius of the purest pantheism retains the concept of motionless, formless being as the essence of the unqualified Absolute.

It is not difficult to understand the charm exercised by this philosophy of the Infinite over some of the purest and profoundest natures that have adorned the annals of thought, in Asia and in Europe. There is in it the promise

of a way of escape from the clash of incidents, struggling of lives, and conflict of interests that make the bewilderment and the weariness of earthly existence. There is in it the solace of an infinite calm existing in the solemn depths of being, far beneath the storm and stress of superficial things; the pledge of release from the exhausting pursuits and competitions that fret the lives of mortals, haunting them with baseless hopes, tormenting them with illusory desires. There is in it the repose of the Absolute, the Undefined, the Unconditioned, standing over against the turmoil of a vain world as the cool glades of the primeval forest call one away from the parched and arid plain.

For herein, I suppose, is the essential power and charm of pantheism; not, as some hastily have judged, in that it deifies nature, making every power of the physical world and every human life a manifestation of the Divine, but in the far deeper thought that it undermines and dissipates the reality of all that is finite; that it solves life's problems, obliterates life's errours, relieves life's burdens, assuages life's sorrows, quiets life's craving with one great word—*illusion.* It is a striking evidence of the correspondence of pantheism with a certain element in man's nature that is found in the common life of humanity beneath all race-differences, that long before the Indian philosophy was known in Europe there were pure and gifted spirits who, like Spinoza, were working along the lines of the loftiest pantheism to undermine the reality of the finite and to give the weary soul of man relief from its burden through a doctrine of illusion. That effort, whether pursued in the East or in the West, never can be spoken of save with reverence by those who are disenthralled from religious prejudice and whose hearts are full of love. For, in its

two characteristic endeavours, the approach to the Infinite by the way of negation and the solution of the problem of phenomenal being by the principle of illusion, are suggestions of the highest moral value. I would deal with these two characteristic notes of pantheism in a reverent and appreciative spirit. Time forbids me to discriminate between the pantheism of Spinoza, that rare fruit of the Semitic stock, and the pantheism of the Aryan schools of Hindustan. But, assuming that discrimination, which an ampler treatment of this theme would involve, I note with admiration the philosophical idealism that seeks to find the Infinite by the path of negation. The scale of such thinking is vast, elemental, heroic. It emanates from a sense of the Divine Immensity. It is the expression of that infinity in man which makes him capable of conceiving that which cannot be described or bounded. It is a perpetual protest against all petty conceptions of God that would make Him even such an one as ourselves. It is the triumph of that subtle sense of proportion which conceives the supreme Self as greater than any account of Him that can be given by the mind of man. It is that insistent aspiration of the soul which, seeking one symbol of expression after another, that it may define the nature of God, finds them all inadequate, casts them all aside, and soars upward, as on the pinions of eagles, into the unconfined, eternal essence of pure Being. In every age the most exalted souls thus have approached God by rising above the symbols of God. Is it not this impulse, which also moves in the purest pantheism, that throbs in the soul of the Hebrew prophet as he cries: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being His counsellor, hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment?

To whom will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? The graven image? A workman melteth it, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth for it silver chains. He that is too impoverished for such an oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot, he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to set up a graven image that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth on the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers: To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy one!"[1]

Not less impressive than this approach to the Infinite by the way of negation is that companion note of the purest pantheism, the resolution of all phenomena, all cognitions, all volitions, all individualising bodily organs and mental functions, into one vast illusion, one all-embracing unreality.[2] At the foundation of this doctrine of illusion, unless I quite misapprehend its scope, lies the same heroic conception of the supreme Self to which already I have referred. That supreme Self is conceived as the only Reality. The innumerable differences and subdivisions of human life and the phenomenal world; the individual wills, emotions, cognitions of men; the forces and appearances of the visible universe, were they real, would be limitations placed upon the absoluteness of the highest Self. Therefore they cannot be real in themselves. They are but the mysterious cloud of illusion that envelopes the one Reality; the hindering web through which at last the enlightened soul shall break from the thralldom of

[1] *Cf.* Isaiah 40 : 13–25.

[2] TRIPATHI, *Sketch of the Vedanta Philosophy*, *passim;* also THIBAUT, *The Vedânta-Sûtras* ("Sacred Books of the East," Vol. XXXIV, Introduction), p. 34.

merit and demerit, desire, struggle, pleasure, sorrow, toil, attainment, failure, into knowledge, the knowledge that its selfhood is one with that highest Self. It is a thought that has visited many a seeker after rest whose philosophy was by no means pantheistic—a thought that breathes the very deepest yearning of the soul. For who is there among the noble souls of the ages that has not longed "to escape from the unrest and dissatisfaction which the ordinary desires and passions engender, and to find some object in union with which the soul would attain to a perfect and abiding rest"?[1] Who is there that hungers not for absolute reality, as the ordinary objects of human desire are proved by experience to be "illusory and deceptive, filling the soul with vain hopes, and, in the very moment of attainment, vanishing from the hand that seemed to grasp them"?[2] Is it not this sense of the exhausting confusion of the phenomenal world as contrasted with the peace of the infinite Reality that impels the Psalmist to cry: "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and I said: Oh! that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest"?[3] Is it not this sense of an unseen Reality abiding forever beneath the incessant transitions of the phenomenal present that leads the Apostle to say, as one who detects life's illusion and pierces the veils of the unreal: "For our light affliction which is for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal"?[4]

Christianity, while it views with respect the mental

[1] *Cf.* J. Caird, *Fundamentals of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 99.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 100. [3] Ps. 55 : 6. [4] 2 Cor. 4 : 17, 18.

processes that approach the idea of an Infinite God by the path of negation, and that solve the mystery of the phenomenal world by a doctrine of illusion, does not arrive at the conclusions that produce a pantheistic philosophy. Inasmuch as the distinctive beliefs of Christianity can be understood and their religious values can be estimated only in the light of their philosophical antecedents, I shall suggest certain grounds upon which Christianity must be differentiated from all pantheistic systems.

It will be sufficient for my purpose to indicate two such grounds.

Christianity stands apart from pantheism in its method of reaching a conception of the Infinite One and in its estimate of human personality.

I have pointed out that, in the purest and highest type of pantheism, approach to the idea of an Infinite One is made by the path of negation, by stripping off and casting away all qualifying terms, attributes, distinctions, relations, until the process of elimination is complete and there remains only a Unit of Being—separated from all differences—the absolute simplicity of being. That is conceived as the highest Self, the ultimate Reality, which, having the least content, comes nearest to the truth of things.[1] The Christian seeker after God is unwilling to stop at this conclusion of the process of negation. Still pressing forward he advances into the path of affirmation. He seeks to know not merely what God is not, but chiefly what He is. He conceives of that infinite One, not as withdrawing Himself from the individualistic distinctions of the universe and retiring into the inconceivableness of pure being without attributes or qualities, but rather as filling the universe with His fullness, and as realising

[1] *Cf.* Edward Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 146.

Himself through and in the infinite varieties that crowd the universe with life.

I shall speak presently of what God is to the Christian; but at this moment I am seeking only to set forth the distinction between the method of pantheism and the method of Christianity in arriving at the idea of God. The one aspires toward an ideal of vague simplicity, eluding description and analysis; the other reaches forth to an ideal of infinite completeness, of inexhaustible wealth of qualities, attributes, and modes of being; the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. In the delight with which Christianity pursues this method of realising God, finding in Him the attributes of an infinitely beautiful Personality, it seems to represent that which is normal in human experience. When I reflect that the pure classic pantheism of the highest Indian thought coexists with an elaborate polytheism, I cannot but be confirmed in the opinion that the nature of man craves as an object of worship, and as a source of spiritual help, that with which, theoretically at least, it can associate personality. I desire to be understood as referring in a respectful spirit to Hindu deities, and as recognising that, in the higher theological systems of Hinduism, those deities are regarded as modes of the self-manifestation of the one, supreme, unqualified Brahma. Nevertheless, that they should assume the importance accorded to them in the religious life of the people, and that in the philosophy of Hinduism there should be schools affirming the personality of Deity, seems to show that the deepest hunger in the soul of man is for a God that can be conceived in terms of personality. Still more am I confirmed in this opinion on observing how, among thinkers of the West, some who were advocates of the most abstract pantheism came at length to clothe that abstraction with the

attributes of personality. Spinoza, to whom already I have referred, asserted at the end of his speculations what he had denied at the beginning. In his philosophy "the indeterminate infinite, which is the negation of the finite, becomes the infinite which necessarily expresses itself in the finite; the all-absorbing, lifeless substance becomes the God who knows and loves Himself and man with an infinite intellectual love."[1]

Christianity also stands apart from pantheism in its estimate of human personality. The lofty monistic idealism of the Vedanta teaches the unreality of personal distinctions and the illusory nature of personal experience. The phenomenal world, or world of ordinary experience, consists of a number of souls engaged in specific cognitions and volitions, and of the objects of those cognitions and volitions: both the cognitions and the objects are alike unreal. The non-enlightened soul is unable to look beyond the veil of illusion, and so instead of recognising itself to be Brahma it blindly identifies itself with these illusive cognitions and seeks its true self in them; in personal experience thus limiting itself in knowledge and intelligence, and burdening itself with merit and demerit, not knowing that the only escape is through knowledge—knowledge that there is no difference between its true self and the absolute Brahma.[2] It is impossible not to be impressed with the sublimity of this conception of personality; yet to the Christian it is far from exhausting the sublimity of all that is conveyed to the mind in the concept, a human soul! For, from the point of view of Christianity, the individuality of God carries with it as a logical necessity the individuality of man. If God be, as

[1] Spinoza, *Philosophical Classics*, p. 303.

[2] *Cf.* Tripathi and Thibaut, *in loc.*

Christianity conceives Him to be, not an "abstract, self-identical, self-sufficing Infinite," not formless being, without quality or attribute, but Life in the utmost wealth of attributes, in the opulence of self-consciousness, in the infinitude of self-expression—if this be God (and this Christianity believes God to be), then the self-completing of His personality involves its expression in the terms of finite intelligences, corresponding with His own intelligence because proceeding from it and existing only in and through His own existence.

In my next lecture I shall speak of the Christian idea of the Trinity as founded in the psychological necessity that the Absolute Being, in order to the completing of His own Selfhood shall express Himself as well as know Himself. But for the present I confine myself to the relation of this principle to human intelligences. It is fundamental to pantheism in its noble purpose to glorify the Infinite, that it shall deny the separate existence of finite souls, on the ground that to admit it would be to limit the infiniteness of Brahma; and therefore the apparent separateness of the finite soul must be regarded as illusion, escape from which is possible only by denying individuation and by identifying the apparent individual with the very substance of God. Christianity, having the same noble purpose to glorify the Infinite, affirms that the completeness of that Infinite is impossible except through the existence of finite intelligences; that, if there be no individual souls with whom God can be in relation and through whom God can realise certain aspects of His own personality, then God is limited, not alone in our thought of Him, but in the actuality of His being. For, evidently, God, on any theory of His existence, must be all-complete, containing in Himself all possibilities of self-realisation. But there

are vast ranges of self-realisation that are conditioned upon the existence of corresponding intelligences, endowed with freedom and capable of experience. Without the existence of these intelligences the supreme Mind is shut out from the perfect knowledge of its own qualities. Man, therefore, in the philosophical system of Christianity, is neither an illusion, beneath which lies the silent, self-contained essence of God, nor is he a monstrous afterthought, projected into time, limiting by his abnormal independence the theoretical infiniteness of Him who is supposed to be all in all. Man is God's fulfilment of Himself; man exists that God may be God in the perfection of His self-realisation along all those lines upon which Spirit holds relation with spirit.

But God can find no self-fulfilment through the existence of man, unless man's existence be as real as His own—yes, unless a man's life be a very extension and reproduction of His own. To give man an unreal and illusory semblance of freedom, with phantasmal endowments of will and conscience, would be to leave God self-limited. God must, as it were, reproduce Himself in man—giving him a freedom which is God's freedom, a will which is God's will, a conscience which is God's conscience; so that man shall be a differentiated emanation from God. This is the most ancient tradition of Christianity, emerging from that undated dawn of thought which is alike pre-Semitic and pre-Aryan: man made in the image of the Eternal, whereby man becomes a living soul, an essential self-fulfilment of God.[1] So Christianity accounts for human personality, not by the principle of illusion, for man is real in his individuation, a necessary reality, else were not God perfectly self-expressed; and not by the principle of

[1] Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7.

dualism, making man distinct from God, living in a region of self-determining life from which, by an incredible inconsistency, the Infinite, who filleth all things, is excluded. Man exists only because God exists, and God's life completes itself in man's life; and every individual is a differentiation of the all-inclusive Life in which it lives and moves and has its being. The freedom of God is in the individual; and the possession of that freedom, which, in the nature of the case, is essential not only to the reality of the individual, but to the self-realisation of God, is the source of moral independence and the ground of moral responsibility.

The message of Christianity to the individual may be stated in the words of another concerning individuality and freedom: "You are at once an expression of the Divine will, and by virtue of that very fact, the expression here and now, in your life, of your own will, precisely in so far as you find yourself acting with a definite intent, and gaining through your act a definite empirical expression. We do not say, Your individuality causes your act, We do not say, Your free will creates your life. For *being* is everywhere deeper than causation. What you are is deeper than your mere power as a physical agent. Nothing whatever besides yourself determines just what constitutes your individuality, for you are just this unique and elsewhere unexampled expression of the Divine meaning. And here and now your individuality in your act is your freedom. Thus your freedom is your unique possession. Nowhere else in the universe is there what here expresses itself in your conscious being. And this is true of you, not in spite of the unity of the Divine consciousness, but just because of the very uniqueness of the whole Divine life. For all is Divine, all expresses meaning. All

meaning is uniquely expressed. Nothing is vainly repeated; you, too, then, as individual are unique. And (here is the central fact) just in so far as you consciously will and choose, you then and there in so far know what this unique meaning of your individuality is. Therefore are you in action free and individual, just because the unity of the Divine Life, when taken together with the uniqueness of this life, implies in every finite being just such essential originality of meaning as that of which you are conscious. Arise then, freeman, stand forth in thy world. It is God's world. It is also thine."[1]

I have ventured to assert that the distinctive beliefs of Christianity can be understood and their religious values can be estimated only in the light of their philosophical antecedents. And I have attempted to show that Christianity, while appreciating the contributions of pantheism to religious thought, stands apart from pantheistic systems in its method of reaching a conception of the Infinite and in its estimate of human personality. Its idea of God is comprehensive rather than eliminative. It does not regard simplicity of being as the highest type of existence. It does not identify God with that formless essence which, devoid of attributes and differentiations, may be supposed to exist, prior to self-realising activity, in the serenity of the untroubled Thought. It fills its idea of God with the wealth of complex, manifold, self-realising life; life that is perfect because all-embracing, self-expressive, personal.

It sees in human personality the finite correspondence for this infinite Life; God realising Himself in man; man unthinkable without God; the unique expression of the Divine will, and, by virtue thereof, free, with the freedom

[1] JOSIAH ROYCE, *The World and the Individual*, p. 469.

of God, in the inalienable rights, responsibilities, and realities of personal existence. I do not make these statements as one imparting to his auditors that with which previously they were unacquainted; for I speak to many who long have been familiar with the Christian point of view and to whom it has been a subject of profound study. Nor do I speak as if these views of God and the individual had no counterparts in Eastern thought; for among the religious thinkers of India are many who, while manifesting no approval of Christianity, are steadfast in these two fundamental beliefs of Christianity—the personality of God, the reality of the human soul.

My purpose in these foregoing affirmations has been to establish a basis upon which to estimate the religious value of the distinctive beliefs of Christianity. By this term I intend to indicate subjective value—value for the individual, realised by him through experience. These terms, "value" and "experience," simple in themselves, call for definition when employed in a religious connection before an audience of oriental minds.

Value may be objective and absolute, or subjective and relative. Under a government adopting a gold standard, a coin issued by the realm is understood to have an absolute value. It stands for so much; no more, no less. That absolute value is not affected by the sentiment or the condition of him who uses the coin. Whereas relatively the single gold coin may appear to have a far greater value for him who is in need than for him who is in affluence, absolutely the value is fixed and cannot be diminished or increased.

But who has not possessed some precious keepsake that came from a beloved one? It might be a book inscribed by a dear hand long resting in death. It might be a

flower held and breathed on by one whose radiant countenance has vanished forever. What is its value? To a stranger, nothing; it is a thing to be set aside and forgotten. To you, who see in it the pledge and sacrament of undying love, and unto whom it is as the "touch of a vanished hand," its value is above rubies. Such value is subjective and relative, determined by that which is within yourself: memory, affection, sorrow.

It is altogether in this latter sense, subjective and relative, that I shall speak of the religious value of Christian ideas. It is the only practical sense in which the term can be applied, in the present stage of our discussion. I may, indeed, be convinced that these ideas have an absolute value which is objective, in themselves, and equal for all men. I may give reasons for that conviction, and may attempt to bring others into concurrence with it. But that attempt, however earnestly made, must lack the kind of authority with which I am able to speak of the subjective value of these ideas for one who has incorporated them in his own life. What is the nature of the authority which enables me to speak with assurance of the subjective value of the religious ideas of Christianity, that is, their value for the individual? Manifestly the only authority I can claim is the authority of experience; primarily my own experience, as that to which I have immediate access; secondarily, and by way of corroborative testimony, the experience of many other persons, reported to me and coinciding with my own.

What is experience? Considered merely as a word in the vocabulary of language, experience is the action of putting to the test; it is an operation performed in order to ascertain or illustrate some truth; it is, then, the fact of being consciously the subject of a state or condition; it

is, finally, knowledge resulting from what one has undergone.[1] Concerning the truth of these definitions from a literary point of view, probably there will be no discussion. But when, not seeking a literary definition, but a philosophical analysis, I ask, "What is experience?" immediately I am furnished with two replies which appear to be mutually contradictory, if not mutually destructive. I shall be told by some: Experience is illusion; it is the veil that enwraps and impedes the unenlightened soul, keeping it from the knowledge of its highest self. I shall be told that the emotions, conceptions, beliefs, purporting to be communicated to the soul by the ideas of the Christian religion, are shadows cast by shadows. I shall be reminded that the recognition of experience is a stumbling-block in the soul's progress toward release, and that the path of wisdom leads away from the low and fog-bound levels of experience to those heights where the individual self is taken into the absolute Self as the viewless air that sweeps up the mountain-pass is lost, yet never lost, in the infinite etherial atmosphere.

But, on the other hand, I shall be told: "Experience is real for a self-conscious individual." "A will, concretely embodied in a life, is reality. The self-conscious Absolute which we call God is the ultimate Reality. He embodies one will and realises this will in the unity of His own life. And every finite, self-conscious individual is real up to his limit and in his own measure free, and no other finite individual could take his place, share his self-consciousness, or accomplish his ideal."[2] By finite experience we mean that this self-conscious individual sees, observes, knows, lives. This is his realm of experience, and it is real. I

[1] *Cf.* MURRAY'S *Dictionary, in loc.*

[2] *Cf.* ROYCE, *The World and the Individual*, pp. 359–66; *The Conception of God*, p. 272.

am glad to feel that there are many in India, who, while not accepting Christianity in its theological conclusions, concur in its assertion of the reality of personal experience.

Whatever results may issue from a philosophical analysis of experience, touching its reality or its unreality, there is, surely, a ground upon which all thinking persons stand together. That ground is: the reality of a self in man. Whatever that self may be, whether God, or Brahma, or man made in God's image and endowed with self-determining powers, the existence of that self cannot be denied. "He who denies it would himself be that self which he denies. No self can deny itself."[1] The existence of a self in man is personal identity. "My personal identity," says one who thought deeply on these matters, "implies the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call myself. Whatever this self may be, it is something which thinks and deliberates and resolves and acts and suffers. I am not thought, I am not action, I am not feeling; I am something that thinks, and acts, and suffers. My thoughts, and actions, and feelings change every moment; they have no continued, but a successive, existence; but that self or I, to which they belong, is permanent, and has the same relation to all the succeeding thoughts, actions, and feelings, which I call mine. The proper evidence I have of all this is remembrance."[2]

Experience, from the point of view of these lectures, is the totality of what that undeniable self in a man thinks, does, and suffers. It is not necessary to determine whether that is reality or unreality. We may retain our different convictions on that point. But we know that in a sense, whether it be real or whether it be illusion, experience is

[1] Max Müller, *Theosophy or Psychological Religion*, p. 304.

[2] Reid, *Intellectual Powers*, Vol. III, chap. 4.

something which as men we share. What is this parching of the throat, this aching of the head, this shivering and burning that racks the frame of the fever-stricken, as he tosses on his couch through the hot night, and waits for the cool breathing of the dawn? It is experience. What is this sense of delight that suffuses eye and brain and heart, as the fever-stricken one rises from the bed of illness and goes forth into the valleys of nature, where flowers are springing and fountains are welling, and shadows are tracing arabesques on velvet lawns, and winds more gentle than the music of harps are playing celestial symphonies through groves of cedar? It is experience. What is this horror of great darkness that turns day into night, this pitiless pang that pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, this sorrow that dries up the springs of courage and ages the heart between sunrise and sunset, when death, mocking at our defences and heedless of our fears, enters in to smite the blessed object of our love? Nay, what is love, and what is service, and what the passionate temptation, and what the moral victory, and what the aspiration that rises like a tide within the soul, and lifts it, as the ship is lifted on the wave, toward all holy perfection, disenthralling knowledge, mystical union with the life of God? It is experience. Call it reality, or if your philosophical conviction be so, call it illusion; but, real or illusory, it is that which comes to us; it is that which makes us, for better or for worse, the men we are in this present world.

It is with this that I deal: first of all as a man, in loving sympathy with all his brother-men; then, as a Christian, testifying as one who has seen, albeit dimly, a kindly light that is shining for every man that cometh into the world; a gift misused by many that claim to have received

it, misunderstood by all that have judged it in its weak and fallible representatives rather than in its inherent merit; a power for inspiration, purification, consolation, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

The term "religious experience" would express the sum of effects realised through feeling, conscience, reason, and conduct in the self-consciousness of the believer in a religion. It is quite unimportant whether philosophy describes these effects as real or as illusory. Apparently they are realised, and the apparent realisation of them is religious experience for each individual who realises them for himself. Here again we all stand on common ground, whatever our religion. The Mohammedan, the Hindu, the Parsi, the Jew, the Christian must have religious experience; for that term connotes simply what his religion contributes to his own life; what it means to him; what it gives to him, be it much or little. It is religious experience if it satisfies and stimulates and sanctifies him as an individual. It is religious experience if it conveys to him the realisation of itself as truth, the very truth of God for him and for all men. It is no less religious experience if it fails to satisfy him; if it beckons him onward only to elude him when he seeks to depend upon it; if it discloses weaknesses as he investigates it; if it gives him a stone for bread when he turns to it to appease the cravings of his spiritual nature.

"Christian experience" is a term which describes the totality of effects realised through feeling, conscience, reason, and conduct in the self-consciousness of one who yields himself intellectually, ethically, and spiritually to the ideas affirmed in Christianity. Christian experience represents the religious value of Christianity for one who

believes it; that value being regarded as subjective or relative; its value to him; its contribution to the completeness of his life in this present world (be this present world real or illusory). It stands for the measure in which Christianity makes life in this present world more worth living, sustaining it with rational consolations, enriching it with productive ideas, broadening it with educative convictions, equipping it with social adaptations, inspiring it with glorious hopes. It is not my purpose to offer the Christian experience of any individual, for example my own, as objective evidence of the truth of Christianity as a religion; for the results derived from experience are evidentially conclusive to him alone who possesses the experience; the evidential value for another is strictly relative; in one case it may be great, in the other case it may be unimportant. My ultimate purpose shall have been attained if a recital of the influences brought to bear upon the feeling, conscience, intellect, and conduct of one believer in the essential conceptions of Christianity shall lead to a clearer apprehension of the religious importance and charm of those conceptions, and shall awaken in some thoughtful heart a desire to test for itself the alleged power of those conceptions to enhance the joy of a man's life in this present world, to fortify its moral energy, to augment its value as a social force.

The two foundation principles on which Christianity rests its appeal to the individual life are its belief in God and its belief in man; that is to say, it believes in God as self-conscious, absolutely self-determining, infinite Personality; it believes in man as self-conscious, relatively self-determining, finite personality. It relates God to man by a method of thought that suffuses like a luminous atmosphere every part of the system of Christian belief;

a method that is a unique blending of three philosophical conceptions. Christianity is not satisfied with the dualistic doctrine of a transcendent God, which would separate Him from the world and, by placing Him on a throne in the heavens, would give Him an apparent exaltation, which upon reflection is seen to be actual limitation. Yet, out of transcendence, Christianity takes up into its idea of God an element of essential truth never to be surrendered. Nor is it satisfied with the doctrine of an immanent God, present in matter and in mind, coextensive with the universe; for the immanence that is without transcendence may become indistinguishable from a mere property of the universe; limiting God in the very act of thought that seeks, and intends to affirm, infinity. Yet, out of immanence Christianity takes up into its idea of God an element of essential truth never to be surrendered; a truth that fills the whole earth with the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Nor is it satisfied with pure monism—such sincere and consistent monism as makes the conservative school of the Vedanta pre-eminent in the realm of theistic speculation; monism that recognises only Absolute Being and denies the reality of all individualistic distinctions. For Christianity believes in man as truly as it believes in God; in man as the self-fulfilment, not the limitation, of God; in man as possessing that inherent finite self, through which and with which the absolute Self finds perfect expression; in man as from God and of God, yet separate and inviolable in the rights and responsibilities of real, finite selfhood. Nevertheless, out of monism, Christianity takes up into its idea of God an element of essential truth never to be surrendered; an element that has interpreted Deity and sanctified humanity.[1]

[1] *Cf.* ILLINGWORTH, *Divine Immanence*, pp. 69, 70.

Thus does the Christian idea of God gather and assimilate many elements. He is trancendent in that eternal Selfhood which is independent of all time and space relations; in that Essence which no man hath seen nor can see; in the movements of that Mind whose thoughts are not our thoughts, whose ways are not our ways. He is immanent, filling all things with His Spirit, realising Himself in His works, living in all that lives. Creation is not a finished act of the past, but a continuous process. The will of God is the energy of the universe; "uniform and permanent in quantity, yet expressing itself in modes of infinite variety."[1] He is one with the individual soul in an essential monism, for the nature of man is unthinkable apart from God, in whom we live and move and have our being; the freedom of man is God's freedom locally manifested; the individuality of man subsists in this, that each life is a unique expression of the Divine energy.

The relation of this idea of God to the personal experience of one who believes in it is founded upon the Christian conception of man as a self-conscious, free, responsible being. The idea of God comes to the individual soul of a Christian as an objective force working upon it, contributing to its life, influencing feeling, guiding conscience, suggesting or restraining action; because a Christian thinks of himself as a self-determining personality, not as the essence of absolute Being existing under the illusion of finite personality.

For a religion founded on a pure and consistent theosophical monism no such experience as Christian experience logically is possible. It cannot say: "Because God is as He is, therefore I feel these emotions toward Him, and am impelled to this renunciation or to that

[1] FAIRBAIRN, *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 59.

act of service." It cannot say: "I love God," or, "I serve God," or, "I aspire to be like God," or, "My soul is athirst for God." Such language is unintelligible in the lips of consistent monism. What it says, if consistent with itself, is: "I am God, God is I; and all this confusion of unbidden feeling, and instinctive aspiration and yearning toward God is an entangling shroud of unreality, a blinding mist." I do not mean to imply that consistent monism is unethical, that it has no place for holy conduct. Far be it from me to utter such folly. The ethical qualities of some who have lived on the highest levels of monistic speculation are as conspicuous as the snowy summits of the Himalayas. I affirm simply that the ethical element in pure monism differs from the emotions and volitions of Christian experience in respect of several interesting particulars. In stating these I am drawing no invidious comparisons; I am seeking neither to be a special pleader for Christianity nor to disparage other faiths. I am not here in the temper of a critic. My purpose is to analyse Christianity in the presence of those who have not adopted it as their own faith. As a Christian I am bound to do this. A religion worthy of consideration by thoughtful minds should invite the closest analysis of its motives.

I would point out, then, that the ethics of pure monism differs from Christian experience in important particulars—namely in the nature of its incentive; in the nature of its obligations; in the nature of its satisfaction. It differs in the nature of its incentive; the incentive of pure theosophical monism toward ethical feeling and conduct is self-deliverance. "I am God; to abstain from the world and its phantasmal entanglements hastens the deliverance of that absolute Being which I am, from the bondage of

illusive individuality, from the vortex of life." The incentive of Christian experience toward ethical feeling and conduct is the Holiness of God; seen, adored, imitated. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[1] Here the incentive to holiness is not egoistic. It is an objective influence pervading the soul; informing its thought, conforming it to the Divine perfection. The incentive is not self-deliverance from phantasmal bondage. It is the power of the beatific vision of Divine excellence over the reason, the conscience, the emotions, and the will of the soul that knows itself, not as God, but as the offspring of God, in whom the Eternal Father would fulfill Himself, as the earthly parent would fulfill himself in his child.

The ethics of theosophical monism differs from Christian experience in the nature of its obligation, or moral imperative. The world being unreal, and the end of goodness being the escape from unreality into absolute Being, goodness becomes in the individual a provisional expedient to hasten self-deliverance, the value of goodness becomes egoistic and relative, a means to an interested end; and, conversely, the significance of non-goodness also is egoistic: it retards self-deliverance from the vortex of life. The moral obligation recognised in Christian experience is founded on the absolute value of goodness and the reality of the finite self. "Right is right since God is God." The consistent Christian seeks after holy thought and conduct because right and wrong are realities of a moral universe, and because the will of God is righteousness. From this root of thought springs the Christian conception of sin, of which I am to speak in my fourth lecture.

[1] St. Matthew 5:48.

The ethics of monism differs from Christian experience in the character of the satisfaction accompanying right conduct. That satisfaction, in the nature of the case, is egoistic. "Since I am God, if I am holy I find satisfaction in the promise of self-deliverance, release, emancipation from illusion." For a soul of the finest fibre that prospect of resolution into absolute Being must be a vision of delight. But, in Christian experience, the highest satisfaction accompanying holy thought and right conduct is the hope, if not the consciousness, of pleasing God; the joy of doing the will of God. If one ask: "Why is there joy in doing the will of God?" the reply must involve the philosophical basis of Christianity; its doctrine of God and its doctrine of man. God is love; man is an object of that love. To do the will of God is to answer love with love; and that is joy.

I shall conclude this lecture, and my argument upon this part of my subject, by pointing out certain elements in the content of the Christian idea of God, and by showing their religious value for him who accepts them. That conception of absolute Being which is the goal of the most consistent theosophical monism is reached by the path of negation. In words recently published in India: "There truly exists only one universal Being. It is not a thinking Being, but pure thought. It is absolutely destitute of qualities, whatever qualities or attributes are conceivable can only be denied."[1] I wish to express my sense of the intellectual dignity of motive prompting this method of approach to the idea of God. It represents a lofty conception of the immensity of absolute Being. While it may tolerate polytheism as a needed concession to the conventional limitations of human thought; while

[1] *Cf.* TRIPATHI, *op. cit.*

it may welcome symbols as aids to devotion; while it may personify powers of nature, and invest those personifications with individuality; its deeper instinct repudiates the claim to finality on the part of any of these, presses past them and all else that would bind with attributes the Essence of the Illimitable; until thought, climbing above all polytheistic distinctions, spurns at length the topmost peak of personality, and, spreading its wings, plunges forth into the awful void of the unqualified, the impersonal, the ultimate abstraction.

Christianity, climbing the same mountain of approach to the idea of God, stops not at negation, but presses on to affirmation. Its objective is, not the void of abstract Being, but the fullness of perfect Life. To its thinking, the simplicity of the pure Abstract is not the highest possible conception of infinity. For the pure Abstract is without personal relations and so without that entire self-realisation which is the measure of complete existence. In the primordial forms of organic life, simplicity of organisation coexists with sluggish and rudimentary self-realisation; it has few points of contact with other existences. In the animal groups, a more complex organisation is attended with a higher type of self-realisation and a wider range of external relationship. In man, with his mysterious psychic forces come yet more marvellous self-realisations and differentiated contacts with other existences, which, in the highest types of culture, suggest foreshadowings of infinity. So, God is the fullness of perfect Life, the absolute Self-realisation; which is in relation with all other existences, from the lowest to the highest; so that, on the one hand, not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Heavenly Father, and, on the other hand, not a human spirit lives on the heights of intellectual and moral

greatness, or struggles in the depths of ignorance, pollution, and woe, unrecognised, unremembered, unloved, unpitied by that All-knowing, All-sensitive, All-embracing Life.

Approaching the idea of God by this path of affirmation, Christianity finds the content of the idea rich beyond expression, and, in the elements of that content it finds that which reacts upon experience; making life in this present world more worth living, enhancing its joys, fortifying its moral energy, augmenting its social force. To exhibit all the elements realised by Christianity in the idea of God, and to show how each of them contributes to the value of one's life in this world, would carry me quite beyond the time limits of this lecture. I shall merely name four of these elements; briefly commenting upon the first of them and leaving the others to be developed in my next lecture.

*Timelessness*, *presence*, *character*, and *manifestation* are four elements that enrich the content of the Christian idea of God and give it a religious value for the present life of each pilgrim through this world. If, as I set forth these elements, many who are devout adherents of non-Christian faiths feel that I am stating nothing that is not fully understood by them already, as being part of their belief, part of the solace or the inspiration of their own lives, I shall rejoice. For I have no desire to claim for Christianity a monopoly of spiritual ideas, or to present it as a religion unrelated to the other forms of human faith. No belief is more dear to the Christian than that of the universal energy of the Spirit of God, and if at many points the paths of the seekers after God converge, if they who are sundered in respect of some subjects of belief are at one in respect of other subjects, these approxi-

mations and coincidences bear witness to the universality of God; they prophesy of yet closer approximations for all those whom His Spirit leads.

*Timelessness*, or freedom from the restrictions imposed by time relations, is an element in the idea of God which does for Christian experience what the foundation does for the house built thereon. As a tent pitched for a night, vanishing at sunrise; a thing without anchorage, without local continuance; the prey of the whirlwind, the load of the pilgrim—such is human life apart from the timelessness of God. No element in our lot is more perplexing than the time relation. Its evanescence; its progression; its momentum; its limitations; its connection with misery and happiness; the physical correspondences of our being with the time relations of birth, and growth, and decay, and death; the effects of time in the world of nature—seedtime and harvest, and summer and winter, and cold and heat, and day and night; the time element in civilisation; the ebb and flow of thought-movement from generation to generation—all this is so inscrutable that many mighty thinkers of the ages have pronounced it illusion. Nevertheless even as an illusion it must be reckoned with by man; for, whether his finite self be also illusion, or whether it be real, so is it made that it knows itself in these time relations and conditions its present life upon them. What is hope, what is memory, what is continuous volition, what is pain, what is sorrow, but an aspect of individuality realised in time relations? "We spend our years as a tale that is told."[1] "What is your life?" cries one of the early Christian teachers: "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away."[2] In youth, when, apparently, a long

[1] Ps. 90:9. [2] James 4:14.

bright day is before one and existence glistens in morning sunshine, the unsubstantial nature of earthly conditions hides behind the optimism of unspent vitality; but, as the years advance and changes multiply, as memory records the names of vanished friends and the history of unfulfilled ambitions, unfinished works, unenduring satisfactions, the spirit of man cries out for some solution of the mystery, or for some anchor to steady it in the swelling tide of life. Nothing testifies more conclusively to the mysterious greatness of man than his manifold and persistent refusals to be passive toward the problem of time relations, as the drift wood is cast hither and thither upon the waste, or as the beasts that perish lie down and know not that their hour is come. Pessimism has its characteristic attitude toward time relations; the bitter protest against a force that turns life into mockery and sweeps it away as a dream. Fatalism has its austere yet heroic doctrine of submission to the inevitable. Theosophy utters its protest by the denial of reality. Christianity takes refuge in the timelessness of God: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."[1] The timeless One that inhabiteth eternity; whose nature cannot be limited by days and years; whose thought is knowledge; with Whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning; whose Being is absolute; whose name is "I am;" He is the foundation on which Christianity builds its doctrine of human life. "Jehovah

[1] Ps. 90:1-4.

is my Rock, my Fortress, my Deliverer, my God, my Strong Rock; in Him will I trust."[1] The Christian realises, with all thoughtful men, the transitoriness of life, the illusive and subtle nature of time, the extraordinary limitations imposed on human action by temporal conditions; the pang, the peril, or the doom that attends on many vital interests because of those conditions; yet for him life is not a painful illusion, nor a pathetic mockery, nor an aimless mass of contingencies. All is steadied, unified, consecrated by the one great thought extending beneath and binding together all other thoughts: the timelessness of God. "The Eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms."[2]

The timelessness of God means more than that the Almighty is emancipated from the bondage of time relations. It means that those conditions which man, from his point of view, describes as temporal conditions are a mode of the divine Self-fulfillment and of the divine Self-realisation; that the world is God's world, in which, amid and through all of life's vicissitudes, the Christian believes that God is fulfilling Himself in many ways:

> He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
> And thro' thick veils, to apprehend
> A labour working to an end.[3]

It means that the persistent refusal of the human spirit to recognise time conditions as the final solution of the problem of existence is in man the foreknowledge of his own eternity, the pledge of his own participation in the Divine nature.

As the foundation to the house, as the root to the

[1] Ps. 18 : 2. [2] Deut. 33 : 27.

[3] Lord Tennyson, "The Two Voices."

tree, so is this conception of the timelessness of God to Christian experience. It gives a basis on which to build one's earthly house of life; even the assurance that were that house to be dissolved in some whirlwind of adverse time conditions, one has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. It gives an anchorage to thought, striking beneath the accidents of the temporal and superficial, laying hold of the substance of absolute Being. It gives a stability to purpose, relating the deed of the hour to the Eternal One in whose name it is done. It gives a dignity to character, as behoves a soul that knows its kinship with the Everlasting. It gives a hope for the world; that that timeless One, with whom a thousand years are as one day and one day as a thousand years, holds in His mind the key to the awful problem of human history; that unto Him the confusion of events, the tumultuous struggles, the silent sufferings, the achievements of injustice, and the haltings of righteousness, are not what they seem to us; that to His clearer vision the unfoldings of a benignant plan emerge from the darkness, and by His merciful hand the weakness and the sin of man are being overruled for good.

Such is the religious value of the timelessness of God as realised in Christian experience; such its contribution to the worth of existence in this present world. When wearied with the interminable detail of life and its incessant repetitions of unfruitful effort, the Christian remembers the all-embracing Perfection of the Divine Life, and knows that the seed of that completeness is planted in himself, as the offspring of God. When strained by sorrow and separation, the constant and bitter fruits of time relations, he considers that in the Presence of the timeless One all

God-like spirits meet. When burdened with social apprehensions, and oppressed by conditions that retard the progress of good, he lifts up his eyes to the hills whence cometh his help, and reflects that the whole vexed problem of civilisation is present to that Mind that slumbers not nor sleeps; and when, consecrating his powers unto righteousness, and offering up himself unto Christ for such brief service as one life may render, he remembers how little one man may do before the night cometh when none can work—there is given him the recollection of his own kinship with God, and the assurance that the Eternal can fulfil Himself in and through the finite soul.

Wherever Christianity truly exists, the timelessness of God is its perpetual inspiration. The generations perish, but this truth remains the same, yesterday and today and forever. Sorrow and joy, strife and peace, evil and righteousness, death and life, may struggle together amid dissolving time relations; but they that take refuge in the Eternal shall never be confounded. Unto them is it given to say:

> Our God, our Help in ages past,
>   Our Hope for years to come,
> Our Shelter from the stormy blast
>   And our Eternal Home;
> Under the shadow of Thy Throne
>   Thy saints have dwelt secure;
> Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
>   And our defence is sure.
> Before the hills in order stood,
>   Or earth received her frame,
> From everlasting Thou art God,
>   To endless years the same.

We have advanced but to the threshold of the Christian idea of God, In my next lecture we shall enter

within its glorious recesses; speaking of the Presence of God; the Character of God; the Manifestation of God; and viewing all in the light of Him who is the supreme Source of all Christian experience, even as He is the supreme Manifestation in time of the timeless God—the Lord Jesus Christ.

# THIRD LECTURE

## THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE SUPREME MANIFESTATION OF GOD

The close of the last lecture found us occupied with the thought of God's independence of time-relations, as one of the elements that enrich the Christian idea of the Divine Being. Time-relations, with their intricacy and their necessity, do not condition the existence of Him unto whom one day is as a thousand years, a thousand years as one day. He is timeless in essence. Days, months, years; seedtime and harvest; generations, centuries, æons, are modes of the Divine self-realisation and self-fulfillment. The Eternal fulfills Himself in the temporal, even as the Invisible fulfills Himself in the visible. The contribution to Christian experience made by this thought already has been indicated. It adds to the worth of life, making possible intelligent effort and rational hope. It is the background whereon the mental eye, strained by the illusiveness of finite existence, rests and recovers. It is the threshold whereon the Christian enters into the glorious recesses of the idea of God. Crossing now that threshold, hallowed by the feet of innumerable multitudes of Christians, and also of those that acknowledged not the Christian name, yet most truly were seekers after God, may we, as brethren, look on three elements of that fullness which Christianity finds in the content of the idea of a supreme, absolute, timeless Being: the Presence of God, the Character of God, the Manifestation of God.

The timelessness of God, His transcendence of temporal relations, becomes to the Christian a foundation and

a background for living, because the conception of timelessness is realised, not by itself alone, but in association with other aspects of being. Timelessness, abstracted from intelligent life, conveys to the finite mind nothing essentially strengthening or reassuring. Mere independence of time conditions is not, in itself, a quality having religious value. A barren rock, standing in nakedness within the wilderness, may outlast a thousand generations; yet has it no message of comfort for the soul of man. The persistence of inorganic matter mocks at the evanescence of humanity, when one looks upon palace and fortress, built in pride and self-confidence by those who for centuries have slept in indistinguishable dust. The fact that God's life is not, as our own, confined within the bounds of days and years, means nothing that adds value to our existence, until, seen in the light of some other aspect of His being, it becomes related to us.

That relationship is established through the thought of the presence of God. The timeless One whose essence cannot be bound, who inhabiteth eternity, is in His world and in every creature. Christianity conceives that absolute, timeless life as everywhere present. The sense of that all-pervading immanence finds expression both in the ancient Scriptures and in the later minds that have had heavenly enlightenment.

> Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?
> Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?
> If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there;
> If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.
> If I take the wings of the morning
> And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
> Even there shall Thy hand lead me,
> And Thy right hand shall hold me.

Such are the words of a Psalmist dear to Christians.[1] And these are the words of an Apostle: "The fullness of Him that filleth all in all."[2] These ancient utterances are echoed by later words that enter far into the conception of the presence of God:

> I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.[3]

It will be perceived by my learned hearers that these expressions assume not only the presence of God, but the reality of the world pervaded by His presence. This is characteristic of Christianity, and the effects of this view of the world upon the Christian's sense of the value of living will be revealing themselves continuously as my argument proceeds.

To avoid misapprehension, a brief account should be given here of the nature of that reality which Christianity attributes to the external world. It is a middle view between illusion and materialism. On the one hand, Christianity does not regard the external world as illusion, in the sense in which it is so regarded by pure theosophical monism. It believes in the reality of the individual and of the world in which he lives; and while recognising that the intention of a doctrine of illusion may be to exalt the oneness of absolute being by denying the reality of

1 Ps. 139:7–10. 2 Eph. 1:23. 3 WORDSWORTH, "Prelude."

individualistic distinctions, Christianity holds that the existence of individualistic distinctions does not invade the integrity of absolute being, but provides it with a necessary field for self-expression. Therefore Christianity cannot regard the external world as illusion. On the other hand, it does not affirm reality in a materialistic sense. Materialistic realism gives to the external world of matter objective and independent reality apart from the action of mind. It makes the world real in its own right and by its own initiative; separating the reality of matter from mind, and so separating the external world from God. It exists apart from God, and may exist without Him. Thus two principles are introduced into the universe—a spiritual principle and a material principle, existing in mutual independence. And when the materialist, shunning the idea of dualsm, undertakes upon a monistic basis to account for what *is*, mind becomes the mere property of an objectively real world of matter. Between these extremes stands the temperate idealism of Christianity. To it God, and self, and the world are real; but the world is real to the individual only as his thought, his spiritual self, apprehends it; even as the waves of ether are not light save to the eye that receives them. And the universe is real only in that its processes and parts are known, co-ordinated, and controlled through one Intelligence pervading all, working through all, realising itself in all. "He is before all things and by Him all things consist."[1] The unity of life is the self-realisation of the Infinite Mind, in and through all that is.

It is upon this basis that the presence of God within the world becomes an essential element of thought and the whole earth is filled with God. Yet this is not panthe-

[1] Col. 1:17.

ism, the presence of impersonal force—or the presence of abstract thought as distinguished from thinking being. It is the presence of self-conscious, self-determining Intelligence, fulfilling itself in and through all that is, by virtue of its existence as infinite. This presence, which fills nature, fills also the life of man, since man is a part of nature.[1]

It cannot be otherwise, by virtue of God's Infinity. He that is all in all must be in all that is. To say this is not to deny the reality of finite selfhood. The finite self is real; and not only real, but necessary, that the Divine Subject may have self-expression through the human object. In this real self of man God is; and His presence is the basis of spiritual potency in human life. It may or it may not be that conscience is, as Wordsworth said, "God's most intimate presence in the soul;" but, though the mystery of the Divine in man transcends complete analysis and definition, the fact of that presence lies at the foundation of Christian thought.

> O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me,
> Thou understandest my thought afar off,
> Thou searchest out my path and my lying down;
> And art acquainted with all my ways,
> For there is not a word in my tongue
> But lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.[2]

The effects of this belief on those who cherish it add greatly to the worth of life in this world. The presence of God is the consecration of nature. None can deny the magnificence, the power, the marvellousness of nature. Whatever our philosophy, our eyes are open and we see that the world is great. How subtle are its processes of evolution, growth, reproduction, transformation; how enormous are its resources:

[1] *Cf.* ILLINGWORTH, *Divine Immanence*, p. 74.

[2] Ps. 139 : 1-4.

The precious things of heaven; the dew;
The deep that coucheth beneath;
The precious things of the fruits of the sun;
The precious things of the growth of the moons;
The chief things of the ancient mountains;
The precious things of the everlasting hills![1]

How superb is His workmanship: the burnishing of the wings of birds; the indenting of the leaves of trees; the fashioning of gems in the earth; the correlation of organs in the body of man. Physical science apprehends these properties of nature and, with delight, investigates and classifies them. But what shall be done with nature itself? Shall this magnificence, this power, this profusion, this subtle accuracy of procedure, this masterful workmanship, be reduced to illusion and swept into the abyss of the unreal? Or shall it be made a self-producing power apart from God, a self-sufficient eternal principle, a self-sustaining, materialistic, non-intelligent potency? Christianity answers: Not illusion, and not self-propagating force, is the secret of this wondrous world of nature, but conscious, free Intelligence exerting itself and fulfilling itself in the myriad forms and forces of terrestrial life.

Thou Who hast given me eyes to see
  And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee
  And read Thee everywhere.[2]

The presence of God is deliverance from the loneliness of finite personality. There is no loneliness like that of the human spirit driven in upon itself by the elusiveness of the external. The psychic solitude deepens as culture and self-knowledge quicken the sensitiveness of our inner life. The world, absorbed in its own pursuits,

[1] Dect. 33 :13, 14.
[2] KEBLE, "The Christian Year," a hymn for Septuagesima Sunday.

neither knows us as we are nor cares for us. Friendship may go with us for a season, but reaches soon the point where it can advance no farther, and pauses, leaving us to pass alone within the shadows of our personality. The solitariness of the soul sometimes is most awful; in the crowd of lives Individuality is everywhere, yet none that can interpret to us our aspirations, nor guide us in our gropings, nor help us when the mystery of living bows us to earth. Who can wonder that many great souls, driven in upon themselves by the pressure of the external, have sought to identify themselves with the absolute Soul of the universe as the one reality in a world of illusion; or that others, doubting even the reality of God, have held that the one remedy for life's insufferable loneliness lies in the extinction of all selfhood in the selfless silence of Nirvana. The Christian, driven in upon himself by the same pressure, a stranger to his own kindred, craving sympathy for sorrows that he cannot express, groping for light on problems that he cannot formulate, withdraws into the sanctuary of his inner life, not to meet there a mocking void with hollow echoes of his own questionings, but to find the presence of One "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," and to hear a Voice, divinely wise, humanly tender, saying: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[1]

The presence of God gives rational continuity to individual life and to the life of the world. Look down into some great garden when the white summer clouds are flitting across the sun. Behold a thousand shadows coming and vanishing on the lawns—each an illusion, completed by its instantaneous appearance, without relation to aught

[1] Matt. 11:28.

that may precede or follow, leaving no trace upon the substantial earth. So human thought and action, and the succession of lives and the train of generations, have seemed to some as shadows, following each other in incalculable succession; completing themselves by their illusory appearances; leaving no trace; establishing no relations; fulfilling no end. If mortal life be only this, the play of unrelated shadows on the field of being, if there be no underlying meaning, no subliminal purpose fulfilling itself in this world, then indeed is it more wise to believe illusion with its inseparable doom of sadness than to affirm reality; for reality emptied of purpose is more awful than illusion. But to the Christian the presence of God supplies a principle that justifies belief in reality and in continuity, for the individual and for the world. The immanent God, intelligent, self-conscious, self-determining, encircles and conditions all that is. Beneath the fitful play of circumstances, beneath the shadow-dance of impulse and accident, the timeless One fulfills Himself through time. To that all-comprehending Mind each human life has meaning; in His thought each fills a place not filled by another. God is intelligence. God is purpose. "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations."[1] It is worth while to live this mortal life, for the presence of the Infinite gives it continuity and meaning. It is worth while to have hope for the world, for the purpose of the Infinite unfolds beneath the stumblings of nations, the abuse of power, the lack of social love. It is worth while to pray: "Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done."[2]

The presence of God, like the timelessness of God, makes these contributions to the worth of life only because

[1] Ps. 33:11. [2] Matt. 6:10.

the Christian apprehends that presence not by itself alone, but in association with other aspects of being. Mere timelessness may be a thought as barren as the naked rock in the wilderness; so also the mere presence of infinite intelligence, apart from its self-realisation in moral loveliness, may intensify, not alleviate, the sorrow of life. If we affirm the existence of the Infinite Mind, and conceive it not in the appropriate vesture of beautiful character, life for the individual becomes more acutely pathetic. For his sufferings are witnessed by a mind that knows and pities not; his struggles by an intelligence that considers not; his aspirations by a being that offers no ethical ideal. It is easier to suffer in solitude than in the presence of one who knows yet cares not. The presence of God, as an element in the idea of the Divine being, gives sacredness, consolation, and hope to Christian experience because the character of God as conceived by Christianity is what it is. It becomes blessed to know that the presence of God fills all life because the moral qualities of that presence are what they are. In speaking of the character of God I trust that I shall say much that coincides with the belief of many of my brethren who are not Christians. I have no desire to claim for Christianity a monopoly of truth and excellence, nor to set the excellences of Christianity in competition with the excellences of other faiths. Wherever I find the ground covered by Christianity covered also by the tenets of another religion, I rejoice; for nothing I believe more devoutly than that the Spirit of the One God is universal, working in the manifoldness of grace when and where and as He will. I am setting forth the Christian faith in detail, that these points of correspondence with other faiths may appear wherever they exist, and that, if there be any truth

peculiar to Christianity which is capable of being shared by all men, it may be known and appropriated by all and not monopolised by a few.

It may be said that the charm of Christianity centres in the character of God. His timeless being, His intelligent presence, are mighty thoughts; yet would they be barren and comfortless in their austere magnificence were they not clothed with moral qualities that invite our confidence and attract our love. To set forth the elements of God's character as Christianity conceives them would require more time than I can command; but, as mirrors transmit suggestions of broad landscapes, so would I hold before you two expressions of Christian faith in which are mirrored the beauties of the Character of God. "God is Light."[1] "God is Love."[2]

I rejoice to think that Christians are not alone in conceiving God under the symbol of light. It would give me no pleasure to feel that they alone, of all the seekers after Him, had perceived the value of this symbol as a means of expressing certain elements in the being of God. For light, in its gladness and glory, belongs to all men. The sun, rising in majesty, scattering the night shadows, burning away noxious mists, revealing beauty, assisting growth, is for all the children of men. In our common possession of this central source of vitality we are all children of light. Nothing is more natural than that light should be taken up into religious thought as a symbol of God. Nothing is more splendid in the whole range of religious expression than some ascriptions of praise to God as light, arising from non-Christian sources. "I believe," says one of the Zarathushtrian prayers, "I believe Thee to be the best Being of all; the Source of

[1] 1 John 1:5. [2] 1 John 4:8.

light for the world. Everyone shall believe in Thee as the Source of light. Thou createst all good true things by means of the power of Thy good mind. Thou givest with Thy hand, filled with helps, good to the righteous man, as well as to the wicked, by means of the warmth of the fire strengthening the good things."[1] It is, then, in no spirit of superiority, but rather in the spirit of fellowship, that I point out how, in Christian thought, the beauties of the character of God are, in part, mirrored in the phrase, *God is light.*

But, for every mind that uses light as a symbol of God, the symbol is individualised by what it signifies, by the specific connotations that attend it. It becomes therefore a matter of common interest to members of all religions in whose thought the light symbol assists the conception of God, to enquire of the Christian: "What do you mean when you say, 'God is light'? What connotations has the symbol for your mind?"

Assuming that I am asked this question, I reply: Light has at least three distinct connotations—physical, intellectual, ethical.[2]

Physical light is inseparable from suggestions of joy, satisfaction, refreshment. (Of course we must not press the symbolism too far, for none knows better than an Oriental the wearisome glare of light in a rainless summer, or the refreshment of darkness falling down upon over-strained eyelids.) The intuitive associations of the mind with physical light are well put forth in a certain very ancient saying: "Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."[3] Physical light associates itself with thoughts of glory: the play of sunshine on

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 98.

[2] *Cf.* Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, p. 16.

[3] Eccl. 11:7.

the glittering sea; the flashing peaks of snow-clad mountains; the hues of flowers and birds and gems;

> The splendid scenery of the sky,
> Where, through a sapphire sea, the sun
> Sails like a golden galleon.[1]

Physical light associates itself with vision. The eye is the correlate of light. In the idealistic philosophy, which refuses to admit a self-sufficient existence to matter apart from mind, light is not light apart from the property of visibility. The essential property of light is to disclose itself, to make itself seen; even as the essential property of sound is audibility, to make itself heard.

Intellectual light suggests whatsoever is free from ignorance, dullness, error, falsehood; whatsoever is actual, according to reality, of the truth, truth itself. Intellectual light connotes knowledge, spreading its broad rays through the avenues of the knowable world, discerning the relations of things, dispersing shadows, illuminating hidden paths. Intellectual light stands for self-knowledge; for the mind shining upon itself; for the perfection of wisdom; for inerrant judgment; for the identification of truth with self.

Ethical light stands for righteousness, clear, radiant as the sun at noonday; separated from all false lights; steadfast; incapable of misleading; without partiality; a pure whiteness, blended of all moral perfections; the glory of goodness; the beauty of holiness.

In each of these connotations—physical, intellectual, ethical—light becomes for the Christian a symbol of the character of God. As physical light suggests outshining glory and splendour, so that Infinite One is clothed upon with the glory of personal character. He is not imper-

[1] LONGFELLOW, "A Day of Sunshine."

sonal force, a theoretical factor in the problem of existence. He is Spirit, endued with distinctive qualities of radiant perfection. "O my God," cries one, "Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty; who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment."[1] God is intellectual light. No veils enwrap the Infinite Mind. He sees things as they are. "All things are naked and opened before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."[2] "In Him is no darkness at all."[3] In Him knowledge has no element of uncertainty, no alloy of errour; it transcends time-relations, it is conterminous with all that is, even with Himself; it is Truth. God is moral light. Injustice, unfaithfulness, are not in Him. He is upright. "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His Throne."[4] His thought, His purpose, His will, are notes of ethical completeness. God is holiness. God is goodness. And as it is of the nature of light to shine, so this splendour of intellectual and moral light that invests the character of God is expressive, tends to manifestation. God is what He is, not for Himself alone. He is Light in the expressiveness of His being, that He may be known. Because He is, He shines, and men live in His light. All true knowledge emanates from Him: "In Thy Light shall we see light."[5] All human excellences are rays from that central Sun. It was a true instinct that led a great university of Europe to take for its legend *Dominus Illuminatio Mea.*

The beauty of the character of God is reflected in another expression that is a fundamental part of the Christian idea of the Divine Being: *God is Love.* Here also I have no desire to assume that the association of

[1] Ps. 144:1, 2. [2] Heb. 4:13. [3] 1 John 1:5.
[4] Ps. 97:2. [5] Ps. 36:9.

love with the character of God is peculiar to Christianity. I make no such assumption. If others have found their way to the heart of the Eternal, and have felt it "most wonderfully kind," it is the greater joy. But it involves no injustice to the belief of any to say that the history of religion is dark with deities with whom it was impossible for the mind to associate love. Have there not been among men conceptions of deity embodying every quality that could antagonise and defeat love? Have not men worshipped gods that rioted in lust and debauchery and sport; or revelled in bloodshed, and battle; or terrorised with the scourge of fear; or slept in serene abstraction whilst hearts, bowed with their burdens, torn with their sorrows, tormented with their sins, cried out for pity and received no answer? If, by a figure of speech, we may imagine religions helping one another, as, often and tenderly, it is the privilege of individuals to do, in what better way could Christianity serve other faiths than by bringing forth her most cherished belief that God is love?

This is the heart of Christianity, its most central and esoteric truth: God is love. While the influences emanating from it, like the far-spreading beams of sunlight, touch with gladness and warm with vitalising force the whole expanse of Christian belief; this truth itself, like the sun, burns with an insufferable glory that blinds the eye essaying to pierce its depth. The mystery of Christianity finds its focus in this truth: God is love. For these words imply more than the kindly disposition of God toward man. Back of all questions involving relationship to man; back of all time-relations; in the timeless essence of that Life which is self-conscious, self-determining intelligence, God is love. To affirm what this implies is impossible until we reflect on the nature of love.

Love is the affection of one for another. Love is a relation of subject and object. Love is the outgoing of tender thought, seeking response, and finding completion through response. If God in His timeless essence is love, and if love, in the very nature of things, involves subject and object and self-completion through response, then the Divine Essence must contain within itself personal distinctions whereby love is realised. In the timeless essence of pure and holy intelligence, love is the very life of God; the relationship that binds in one ineffable Unity the self-realising, self-satisfying Personal Distinctions—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. This mystery is the heart of Christianity; this is its most central and esoteric truth: God is love. Love is of God. Its fountain and origin are in Him. As one finds the mighty river of the plains pouring through the throngs of human life, attracting towns and villages to its margin, permitting familiar and friendly uses, conveying refreshment and fertility; and as one traces back its course until the mystery of its primal spring is hidden in the silence of the everlasting hills; so love, holy love, the greatest blessing of human life, the river of consolation whose channel should plough the arid plain of existence, and bring coolness and cleanness and hope to every home and heart—love is of God. Its source is not on earth, a thing of time, to come and pass away. It is in the mystery of Infinite Being; in the depths of God; in the self-realising, self-completing Oneness of Him who reveals Himself to our finite understanding as the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

As this love, whose primal spring is in the Essence of Godhead, emerges into time-relations and pours itself upon the life of man, it expresses the attitude of God toward

humanity. God is love in His own self-sufficient essence. God is love in His attitude toward man. That self-expression of tenderness, of holy affection, which completes itself through the Personal Distinctions within the Godhead, in ways incomprehensible by us, utters itself in ways that man can understand, as the Infinite Mind, moving within time-relations, discloses its purpose toward humanity. The heart of man has been slow to believe the simple proposition that God is love. There have been occasional approximations thereto; clear-eyed seers have arisen from time to time, to whom came the vision of love, and the conception of a God yearning toward man. The leaders of Judaism saw glimpses of a gracious and fatherly heart, yet was their vision limited by an hereditary nationalism that set off Israel from the world as the favourite of God, the distinctive object on which His affection expended itself; while for the Gentiles was reserved wrath against the day of wrath.

Apart from these occasional approximations, the heart of man, throughout the long and impressive evolution of religion, has hesitated to launch itself in unreserved confidence upon the ocean-like thought that God is love. We cannot wonder at the hesitation, for the thought of original, Divine love is tremendous to the verge of incredibility. And even within the bounds of Christianity that hesitancy has asserted itself in very striking ways. An unprejudiced study of the history of religion suggests the opinion that the religious conclusion to which man is most reluctant to commit himself is that God *is* love, and that God's attitude and relation to man are the attitude and relation of love. Apparently it has not been difficult to conceive of a supreme power in the terms of impersonal force or principle, subsisting without purpose under all forms of life. Nor has

it been difficult to believe in an absolute, self-sufficient being, the only Reality, impassive, expressionless, hidden for a season under the veil of illusion, which in the end shall be dissolved, leaving the undisturbed Absolute. Nor has it been difficult to believe in a multiplicity of gods, whether ultimate in themselves, or manifold provisional expressions of the one Ultimate Reality; gods with many functions, beneficent or destructive, touching human life at every point, and requiring at human hands forms of service. Along these several lines the faith of immense multitudes has been given with sincerity.

The history of religion shows also a disposition to conceive of God's attitude to man as, antecedently, unfriendly or malevolent, or whatsoever is the reverse of love; and to condition religion on the fundamental ground of propitiating unfriendly Deity, averting malevolent intention, appeasing wrath, winning favour and love by acts of sacrifice and devotion. I speak with the greatest reverence of this type of religious feeling, which has entered largely into the experience of the race, and from which Christians by no means are exempt. I am not here to criticise any who thus have judged of God, and whose religious life has built itself on the presupposition of a malevolent or angry or indifferent deity, who must be appeased with sacrifices, or whose love must be stimulated with gifts. Perhaps it is inevitable that, in the evolution of human thought, these conceptions of God shall occur. There are conditions incident to all lives that make them probable. We all are liable to confuse the terms of the problem of human personality. If we merge our personality in the Personality of God, then trouble, sorrow, need, being illusions, are matters of indifference to God. He cares not that we seem to suffer. If we separate our

personality from God, not remembering that He is our Father and that His life completes itself in us, then that instinctive dread which in every age makes weakness shrink in the presence of power, enters into our conception of Deity, investing it with terrifying attributes, and suggesting the impulse to avert trouble by propitiating its author.

All of us alike are facing the problem of evil, "the supreme enigma of the universe; the formidable obstacle to moral trust in the power continuously working in the world."[1] Animal suffering, human pain, errour with its pitiful consequences, violations of morality against which conscience protests, acts inconsistent with eternal moral obligation, death which cruelly separates persons united in social fellowship—these are evils which seem at variance with a Divine order, with our ideal of love and justice, and with omnipotent moral integrity. In the face of these things, how can one wonder at the sadness of religion, the hopelessness of many of its expressions, the remoteness of man from God, the atmosphere of pessimism, the longing to escape from the intolerable illusion of living? These emotions are involuntary; nay, they are reasonable, if no word has been spoken out of the depths of Infinite Being to deny the terrific inference that all things are as they are because God would have it so; or because God is malevolent and will pursue men with evil until they turn and worship him; or because God is indifferent, enwrapt in the serenity of abstract existence, caring not that the creation groaneth and travaileth in pain.

Christianity believes that that word has been spoken; it is, *God is love*. In the mystery of His essence He realises love through personal distinctions within the

[1] *Cf.* Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, Vol. II, pp. 153-60.

Godhead—distinctions that are dimly conceivable by us in the terms of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Moving in time-relations, He realises love in His attitude and disposition toward man, in the outgoings of holy affection, in the tenderness of holy sympathy, in the yearning of holy desire, in the exertion of holy influence, in the accomplishment of holy purposes.

God is love! That love is original in God, springing out of the depths of His own being. It is not stimulated by an antecedent act of man. It is not purchased by gifts, nor attracted by sacrifices. Love in man is not the cause, but the consequence, of the love of God. "We love, because he first loved us."[1]

God is love! That love is universal. The Jew, true to his Semitic tradition, conceived of God as a national God, and of his love as a special boon of Israel. But, in the fullness of time, that limitation fell away. Love was manifested in world-relations. Its inclusive breadth acknowledged no exceptions. It overflowed all tribal and national limits. It took no account of race lines. It overpassed ecclesiastical and religious boundaries. It asked not whether man loved in return. It embraced the world, saying: "I will draw all men unto Myself!"[2]

God is love! That love is personal. It is the love of a Divine Heart for each human heart; the appreciation by an Infinite Mind of the thoughts, desires, hopes, sorrows, of every human mind. It is the Infinite realising itself in the finite in the terms of love.

This, as I have said, is the heart of Christianity, its most central and esoteric truth. Light and love describe the character of God. Of such a nature is the Presence that pervades the world. Such qualities clothe with per-

[1] 1 John 4:19. [2] John 12:32.

sonality that timeless Essence of infinite life, "who is before all things and by whom all things consist."[1] Christianity faces with all other faiths the problem of evil. With them she feels the prevalence of suffering, the immensity of wrong, the conflict of interests, the shadow of death; for her, as for others, the mystery of pain hangs like a veil over life; yet, hope, and not despair, is the spirit of Christianity; a hope that suffering and wrong and death cannot abolish or destroy; a hope that is as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil. That hope lays hold of the character of God. Life is mystery and life is sorrow. God is Light and God is Love.

Evidently such a faith, for those who are able to commit themselves to it, carries with it a possible contribution to the worth of life, in this present world, which may be described as of the highest importance. It offers a steadfast object upon which to look amidst the shifting phases of existence and by which to resist the paralysing influence of pessimistic depression. Bewilderment gives place to rational conviction. God no longer remains a blank enigma of malevolence or indifference, nor life a chaos of confused adversities. Not less may be the burden of trouble, not lighter the yoke of care, but the mind has a basis for thinking and the heart a resting-place. It offers a channel for pent-up affections of the soul. Man was made for God, and with capacity to love God. Great as is his potency for earthly love, and for realising self-sacrifice on behalf of others (and in this, permit me to say, some beautiful Hindu lives have been pre-eminent), there is in him a capacity for loving the Divine that exceeds even his power to love the human. The deepest emotional

[1] Col. 1:17.

possibility of the soul is love for God. That love, like all other love, inhabits the inner consciousness, imprisoned, unrealised, until the vision of God awakens and liberates it. He to whom God is impersonal force, or impassive mind, or malevolent will, may believe and tremble; he cannot love. But when the character of the Eternal One appears, vested in light as in a garment warm with love, the answering potency of love within the heart of man is kindled and goes forth to God.

I shall ask you now to observe that the two subjects which have occupied me in this lecture—the presence of God and the character of God—rest upon a third subject which is the base of the whole structure of Christian belief. That base is the Manifestation of God. The conception of God as a presence, and the conviction that that presence is invested with moral character of light and love, rest upon the belief that God manifests Himself. The thought of the manifestation or self-revelation of Deity is not peculiar to Christianity. It forms an important and effective part of other faiths. No idea is more familiar to my Indian auditors than that of divine embodiment; of gods coming down to earth in the likeness of men, or of men exalted to divine rank and invested with the insignia of gods. The range of this idea in the field of Eastern religious thought is too vast to be reviewed at this time, and too well understood to require a restatement by me. I shall content myself with an expression of satisfaction that, in claiming the idea of the manifestation of God as the base of the whole structure of Christian belief, I claim nothing in itself unfamiliar to my auditors or alien to their intellectual instincts. While the development of this idea along Christian lines leads to conclusions which, if admitted, will modify the religious

thought of the East and conduct it to a new point of view, the thesis that the Supreme Being manifests Himself is common ground.

The manifestation or self-revelation of Deity is open to two dissimilar interpretations. It may be regarded as apparent rather than real; as a part of the phenomenal and illusory order of the external universe, occurring as a concession to man's limited condition, rather than the outcome of metaphysical relations inherent in the very life of God. In the Gita[1] Krishna is represented as accounting for his incarnation on the ground of emergencies in human affairs: "As often as there is a decline of virtue or an increase of vice in the world, I create myself anew; and thus I appear from age to age, for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, the establishment of virtue." So also when one considers the whole subject of polytheism, it appears as a system for popular use; an adaptation of religion to the craving of the average heart for some sort of manifestation of God; a concession to man's need, rather than the outcome of metaphysical necessity in the nature of Deity. And, in support of this feeling, we find higher intellects soaring above polytheistic manifestations as things to be discarded by the enlightened soul, which, esteeming itself to be identical with the one Unmanifested Self, seeks the realisation of that identity by devotion to knowledge. Such is one interpretation of the Supreme Being manifesting Himself. The occasion for manifestation is emergency in human life, and manifestation is concession to that emergency, by means of incarnation; the taking on of a human body. However beautiful or effective these incarnations may be, they are the expression of nothing in the nature of

[1] *Cf.* IV, 7, 8; SLATER, *Higher Hinduism*, p. 137.

God that demands self-manifestation in order to its own completeness. The conception of God remains as complete without these manifestations as with them, for God, in the last analysis, is impersonal, undifferentiated being; solitary; self-identical; unqualified; the final Result when all personal distinctions have been eliminated.

I cannot point out too distinctly that this method of interpreting the manifestation of God is not the method of Christianity. In Christian thought the manifestation of God is not primarily an expedient adopted as a concession to the ignorance of man; it is the outcome of relations inherent in the life of God. There is a self-revealing principle in the Nature of God without which He would not be God. Self-revelation is not a disclosure of personality extorted from God by external occurrences or forces. It is not an afterthought occasioned by the decline of virtue or the increase of vice in the world. Self-revelation occurs in the nature of personality. God is necessarily self-revealing because God is truly personal. We have seen that Christian thought reaches its idea of God not finally by the path of negation, by eliminating individualistic distinctions, by seeking an unqualified Absolute that shall be emptied of content; but by affirmation, by enriching the Absolute with all possible qualities consistent with moral perfection. And we have seen that Christian thought conceives personality as self-realisation through relations with other existences, and judges that God would be less than human unless His being involved such self-realisation. It is in the deep recesses of the Divine Personality, in what I have called the most esoteric truth of Christianity, that the conception of a self-manifesting God finds its source. The Essence of God is not abstract, undifferentiated being—being from which have

been eliminated the marks of personality, and in which abides only the passive blessedness of pure thought. The Essence of God is life, realising its Godhead through Personal Distinctions, which, whatever else they may connote from the point of view of the Divine Intelligence, interpret themselves to us in the terms, "God the Father," "God the Son," "God the Holy Spirit." In that mystery *is* the Divine Personality. Therein God knows in Himself Subject and Object. Therein love is born. The Father loveth the Son; the Son loveth the Father. Thereby, God is love.

But perfect self-realisation on the part of God demands other existences than Himself, that He may complete Himself in and through them. There is a sense, as we have seen, in which man is necessary to God. The existence of real, finite intelligence is denied on the ground that to admit this reality would be to limit the Infinite. But I have shown that in Christian belief the reality of finite intelligence is essential to the infinity of the Infinite; that God would be limited if there were no finite beings to whom He could give Himself in an expression of that love which is inherent in His personality. As light is only ether-waves, and not light until it be correlated with the eye that receives it, so God is not all that God may be until with His infinite personality we correlate finite personality, to receive His revelation. The manifestation of God, therefore, is no concession to an emergency, no belated afterthought in the halting order of Providence. It occurs in the nature of the case. It is as normal in God as needful for man. It is the seal and attestation of the metaphysical unity of existence.

The manifestation of God enriches Christian experience, adds to the value of life, and justifies belief in its

reality by revealing the presence and by interpreting the character of God. The moral value of manifestation depends on the significance of that which is manifested. By "manifestation" I do not mean wonder-workings, to astonish the ignorant, appall the superstitious, or amuse the curious. I mean self-revelation for moral ends. The ominous play of lightning on the evening clouds, and the phosphorescent flashes in the unresting ocean, are types of much that in the history of religion has diverted attention from the deeper aspects of Divine manifestation to its superficial details. The eyes of men have been dazzled by the miraculous, and blinded to the enormous spiritual truths, in comparison with which miracles are incidental, if not unimportant. Passing by the subject of miracles, as one not requiring discussion in this connection, and permitting myself to say only that I believe in miracles, while not regarding them as the chief credentials of Christianity, and not esteeming them as in any sense more divine than the common and ordinary operations of God, I shall speak only of the moral significance of God's self-manifestation, as it is apprehended by Christian belief and treasured in Christian experience.

The manifestation of God is the self-revelation of His presence and of His character. It is not necessary that the curiosity of man shall be stimulated by the wonder-plays of gods, nor his imagination fed with theistic romances; but from the Christian point of view it is necessary that man shall realise God's presence and shall know God's character. "He that cometh to God," said one,[1] "must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." And these two necessities that condition spiritual religion in man

[1] Heb. 11:6.

correspond to those metaphysical relations in God which make His self-manifestation an integral part of His personality. The infinite self-realisation involves relation with the finite intelligence; that relation becomes possible only as God discloses His presence and His character. For man cannot relate himself to a being of whose existence he is unconscious, nor love a being of whose character he has no conception. In all this I have no doubt that I have the intellectual approval and the spiritual consent of many of my learned hearers who are non-Christian; and now, as in the remainder of this lecture I pourtray that which is most distinctively Christian in connection with the Divine manifesting of presence and of character, I would speak so guardedly that the faith I profess may truly be uttered; so humbly that intense conviction may not be mistaken for arrogant assertion; so lovingly that I may retain the confidence of those who reject my conclusions; so clearly that the intrinsic reasonableness of Christianity may awaken in some minds a disposition to give it more careful examination.

I have said that, in Christian thought, the manifestation of God consists in the self-revelation of His presence and of His character. The manifestation of His presence is made through nature, through history, through the spiritual illumination of man. The manifestation of His character is made in the Person and the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The manifestation of the presence of God is made through nature. So Christ affirms, speaking as a Revealer: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field,

which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"[1] Such was His teaching, antedating natural science, and boldly committing Christianity to the conception of a Deity immanent in nature and expressing Himself through nature. In the intellectual upheavals of modern times many cherished opinions concerning the material world have been swept away, and every physical problem has required restatement in the terms of evolution—a principle toward which the far-seeing wisdom of the Upanishads pointed. The earlier view of instantaneous creation has vanished; the whole conception of the method of material progress has altered; yet the Christian belief that God abides in nature and is operative perpetually therein has but taken on richer and more permanent form through the unfoldings of evolutionary science. So far from the scientific position being incompatible with the Christian position as regards Divine manifestation through nature, the conception of the physical universe as "not a finished product, but a continuous natural process," and of creation as "not a sudden event, but a divinely determined evolution,"[2] is that one which most fully expresses the Christian idea of self-revelation through nature, even as also it is that which makes it possible for a man of science to be a man of Christian faith also.

The manifestation of the presence of God is made through history. All thoughtful minds have pondered the problem of history, seeking some intelligible solution. The stream of events rolling through the centuries, the rising and falling of nations, the genesis and development of beliefs, the counterpoise of social forces,

[1] Matt. 6:28–30.

[2] A. Cambell Frazer, *Philosophy of Theism*, Vol. II, p. 83.

the struggles and sorrows of humanity, present conditions too vital to be ignored. For many great minds illusion is the only adequate solution of the problem of history: one long troubled dream fretting the surface of the universal mind, yet stirring not its depths; one vast *mirage* playing harmlessly above the ocean of impassive being. Others have interpreted the problem of history in the terms of fatalistic necessity: all things moving on in a fixed order, an inevitable sequence; independent of causes; without reason; without purpose; without pity. Others have sought the clue to the mystery in a high predestinarianism, that lodged all causation in the inscrutable will of God—a will that acts on a rational basis, yet veils its reasons from human eyes, leaving no freedom to the will of man. Others, rejecting the theory of Divine will, and oppressed by the reality of life and the cumulative sorrow of humanity, have found in philosophical pessimism the gloomy pathway to a doctrine of despair. The Christian beholds in history the presence of God. Believing in the reality of events and persons, intuitively certain of the freedom of the will, while acknowledging its limitations, the Christian sees in the outgoings of history and behind the volitions of free beings the movement of God's hand, the purpose of God's mind. He believes that the life of the race is neither illusion nor chaos; neither the phantasmal play of unrealities nor the aimless impacts of irrational forces; but rather a field of action whereon free and rational spirits exercise the rights of individuality, in the pursuits of good and evil, beneath the overruling providence of a God who is light and who is love, and who in His own way and time is accomplishing for the world a purpose "too great for haste," and wrought out by men for men. The Christian

sees mind and purpose operating in all history—in the history of the physical world, of science, of civilisation, of government, of religion. He believes in the providence of a good God, seeking spiritual ends and paternal in its quality—a wise, kindly, faithful administration of moral government; a plan of God.[1] Everywhere the fulfillment of that gracious plan is being retarded by the sin and selfishness and ignorance of man. Enormous barriers of unrighteousness resist it, ancient systems of oppression hide it from the suffering ones for whom it is meant. But, dark and difficult as is the riddle of history, tremendous the delay of good and the advance of evil, cruel as are the alienations of races, and pitiful the sufferings of the weak, Christianity sees the purpose of the Eternal moving through time, and knows that, though the day of the Lord tarry, nevertheless it shall come at last; when righteousness shall triumph, and oppression shall be shattered; when the sorrows of hearts shall be comforted, and the Will of God shall be done. It is that sense of God's presence in history that rescues Christianity from pessimism, and puts a new song in its mouth—a song of hope for the oppressed, of courage for the reformer:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are
    stored;
He hath loosed the fatal lightning of His terrible swift sword;
        His truth is marching on!
He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat;
Oh! be swift my soul to answer Him; be jubilant my feet;
        Our God is marching on![2]

The manifestation of the presence of God is made through the spiritual illumination of man. I rejoice to

[1] *Cf.* Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, 6th ed., p. 147.
[2] Julia Ward Howe, "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

think that the idea of the Divine abiding in the heart of man is one of the favourite religious conceptions of the Upanishads.[1] It has been pointed out by Professor Deussen of Kiel,[2] that Indian philosophy took its course uninfluenced by western Asiatic and European thought; and that because of this independence, wherever identical conceptions appear in the thought of East and West, the presumption in favour of their absolute truth approximates to certainty. Nothing is more real to the Christian than the sense of the indwelling Presence manifesting itself in the illumination of the understanding, the communication of influence, the revelation of truth. God is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, making Himself known to us, not by the outward signs only, but by inward assurances and inward gifts. "The Spirit," says St. Paul,[3] "beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." The reasonableness of this inward manifestation is founded on our conception of the unity of personal existence. The apprehension of the external and visible occupies but a part of consciousness. The apprehension of subjective conditions and experiences is a field of observation more extensive, even more trustworthy.

It is not as a pantheist that the Christian conceives of the Indwelling Presence, although much that pantheism has said on this subject could, with slight modification, be translated into the characteristic language of Christianity. The separateness of personal individuality is essential to the Christian idea, although the kinship of the human spirit with the Divine is not only admitted, but held as the necessary protection against dualism. It is by virtue

[1] *Cf.* Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, p. 152.

[2] *Cf. Indian Antiquary*, previously quoted.

[3] Rom. 8:16.

of this community of spiritual essence, this correspondence of nature, that the presence of God has disclosed itself to the experience of men. It has made itself felt from the beginning in that universal yearning toward the Infinite which is, I believe, the most fundamental fact in religion. This correspondence of nature between God and man is the channel of revelation. Through this channel truth has come from God to man. Through this channel not only has the Love of God projected helpful influences, but the Intelligence of God has communicated knowledge not otherwise accessible; making individual persons the recipients of these communications that they in turn might announce them to others. Truth so communicated is revelation. It is not in accord with the spirit of Christianity that any should claim for it a monopoly of revelation, or deny that God has communicated also with the seers and prophets of other religions. To claim that the Bible contains the totality of revealed truth, and that God has not communicated with the seers of other faiths, would be an act of bigotry indefensible on philosophical and moral grounds. Not only would such a claim be incapable of proof, but it would be opposed to the spirit of Christianity, which is not provincial and exclusive, but universal and assimilative.

The true Christian spirit neither claims nor desires monopoly of revealed truth. It believes (in the recent words of an English scholar) that "the history of religion is the history of the gradual revelation to man of the Divine will." It rejoices in the thought that all men everywhere share a spiritual nature capable of receiving communications from God; and that the One God who loves all men alike, and desires that all shall come to the knowledge of the truth, everywhere is working upon

human spirits for good, and through all ages has made special lives the depositaries of such truths as they were able to receive. As it acknowledges the evolutionary method as the method of God in Nature and in History, it is prepared to see the same method employed in Revelation; and to honour all the religious experience of the race as contributory to the one final end of revelation, the full knowledge of the presence and character of God. In this evolutionary order of Divine self-disclosure comes at length that great sequence of communications made to the Jewish branch of the Semitic stock, consummated in the teachings of Christ and the inspired Apostles, and recorded in the collection of books known as the Bible. The significance of these communications was not national, but universal. The distinctive relation of them to the Jews was incidental and provisional. They were the monopoly of no nation, of no continent, of no race. They were not committed to the interpretations of any one system of philosophy, occidental or oriental. They were to be the theological shibboleth of no party, the ecclesiastical badge of no sect, the political engine of no government. They were world-utterances, designed to fill up that which was lacking in all religions; to gather together, co-ordinate, and give common expression to the total religious spirit of the human race. They were to be a well of water set in the open plain of humanity, springing up unto everlasting life, for all, of every name, who should come and drink; a common doorway opened in the elemental structure of things, through which all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues should advance to larger life, and better hope, and clearer vision of a present God.

I approach now the concluding, and I may say the crowning, thought of the present lecture—the thought

for which all that has preceded has been a clearing of the way, and in which is suggested the most august and significant communication that Christianity makes to the world. I have pointed out that, in Christian thought, the manifestation of God consists in the self-revelation of His presence and of His character. Upon the former we have dwelt. I approach with reverence the latter. *The Self-revelation of the Character of God is made in the Person and the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.* We have seen that, in Christian thought, the Divine manifestation is not an incident or an afterthought, but the outcome of relations inherent in the life of God. There is a self-revealing principle in the Divine nature without which God would not be God. He is necessarily self-revealing because He is truly personal. And therefore the significance of the manifestation is moral and not spectacular. It is not mere wonder-play—flashes of supernatural brightness to astonish the ignorant, appall the superstitious, or amuse the curious. It is profound self-disclosure in ways that shall affect the moral life of man—the self-disclosure of His presence and the self-disclosure of His character. Evidently these two, Presence and Character, must be joined to produce a manifestation that shall accomplish moral ends. The conviction of the presence of a Deity, apart from assurance of his character, may indeed produce a religion; it cannot produce a religion of the highest moral beauty. To believe in God may be an act of blind credulity, or of cowering dread, or of impotent hatred. There is an old Christian Scripture that says: "The devils also believe and tremble."[1] It is therefore through the disclosure of His character that God interprets His presence for moral ends. There can be no

[1] James 2:19.

doubt that character is manifested most conclusively in the terms of concrete personality and concrete action. If we wish to know the character of anyone, we study the attributes of personality manifested through conduct. The real greatness or littleness of a soul, ultimately, is mirrored in the life that is lived. It is this principle of life as the demonstration and interpretation of character that conditions the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is not the birth of a hero; it is the Revelation of the Character of the Eternal God under the form of time and in the terms of human action.

I am well aware that in these statements I am proceeding upon assumptions concerning the nature of God that are not identical with those of Hinduism. It is in no controversial spirit that I thus proceed, but in the belief that the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is, in the evolution of Divine revelation, the last and greatest contribution to the value of life in this world; that it is of common interest for all men; that it is worthy of the most serious examination by all who agree with the words already quoted: "The history of religion is the history of the gradual revelation to man of the Divine Will." The Biblical and distinctively Christian idea of the Incarnation of Christ, if it is to be so understood that its great practical value shall appear, must be viewed in contrast with two conceptions familiar to Eastern minds and in themselves of the highest intellectual dignity. One of these is the identification of the human self with the universal Self or Brahma; the other is the noble readiness of the East to welcome heroic human leaders.

The first of these conceptions gives an introspective tone to much of the religious thought of the East, and

exalts an esoteric and subjective knowledge of the Infinite above the objective and reverential *love* of a Personal God, which is the characteristic note of the Christian religion. The first and great commandment of Christianity is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."[1] Christ, setting Himself before us as the concrete object of this affection, says: "If ye love Me ye will keep My commandments."[2] But from the Eastern point of view there is little place for this love in the religious system. Knowledge, esoteric knowledge of the Infinite, excludes it, and excludes it logically; for if I am God and my apparent separateness is the snare that hinders me from realising my identity of substance with the Infinite, love to God, which presupposes my separate individuality, is but tightening the bands that keep me apart from God; retarding that release which can be hastened only by ignoring the personal distinctions involved in love, and plunging beneath them into the abysmal blessedness of undifferentiated knowledge.

As distinguished from this great conception of being, the Christian idea, that the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is the revelation of the character of the Eternal God under the form of time and in the terms of human action, involves a certain philosophical readjustment on the part of some of the Eastern students of Christianity. It requires that, while assuming a monistic theory of the universe (which I believe to be a rational theory), the reality of the finite individual shall be granted. Grant this, grant that the human soul is so far separable from the Universal Soul that the distinction of subject and object is possible, and all that the Incarnation means on

[1] Mark 12:30. [2] John 14:15.

God's side and on man's side becomes intelligible, credible, and precious. Love and knowledge are made one; the finite spirit, conscious of its union with Infinite Spirit, yet surrendering not the god-like powers of individuality, attains, not psychological, but moral oneness with the Divine, through the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. Is it too much to say that this readjustment is not unworthy of the highest intellectual life of India?

On the other hand, the Christian idea of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ must be understood to connote far more than the advent of one of the world's great religious leaders. It is not too much to say that "the idea as to the Person of Christ, created the Christian religion."[1] That religion was not built on the beautiful story of one who was the fairest of the children of men; who combined in himself all loveliness of personality and all power for leadership; who lived a life of stainless purity and died a death of ethical majesty; who drew about himself a little band of kindred souls and so impregnated them with his thought that they became the exponents of his doctrine and the heirs of his spirit. The historic Jesus was indeed the most beauteous of souls, the most illustrious of examples, the most compelling of leaders. Every Christian loves that sweetest and best of stories, the story of the daily life of Him who went about doing good, blessing little children, ministering to the afflicted, instructing the teachable, expelling devils, forgiving foes, leaving behind him a trail of light that time has not extinguished. But the Christian religion is built on "deeper foundations than admiring love for the ideally beautiful leader, Jesus of Nazareth." It is built upon the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; the

[1] Fairbairn, *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 476.

Manifestation of the Eternal, under the form of time and in the terms of human action. "Without this belief," to use the words of Fairbairn, "the religion could have had no existence; the moment it lived the religion began to be. And the process of interpretation was a creative process; every stage in the evolution of the thought marked a stage in the realisation of the religion. In the Synoptic Gospels we have what may be termed the personal and subjective religion of Jesus. In the Apostolical Epistles the Person is interpreted in relation to the religion; the religion becomes more clearly defined, distinct in quality, real in character, absolute in authority. We see it become, first, different from Judaism; next, independent of it; then, absorbent of all that was permanent in it and in other religions; and finally, when Christ is conceived in His Divine dignity and pre-eminence, the religion appears as universal in its unity as the one God is in His sole sovereignty."[1]

It is necessary, then, to differentiate between essential Christianity, which involves the worship of Christ as the Incarnate Manifestation of the Eternal Principle of Sonship that is in the Deity, and that admiration of Christ as a religious leader and social guide which has been so generously expressed by many Indians in words alike noble in themselves and distinctive of the superb capacity in Hinduism for the appreciation of ethical greatness, especially when revealed through a life of self-sacrifice. Nothing can be more just in itself, more worthy of a true soul, more beneficial to society, than to speak well of Jesus Christ; to make much of His qualities as a man; to press His example upon the attention of the world; to hold Him up as the standard of absolute excellence in conduct for

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 476, 477.

all times and all races. The readiness to pay the Christ this homage of ethical submission is becoming more general day by day. By common consent those who are the truest friends of humanity, who value the individual for his own sake and yearn for a better, sweeter social order, are turning in admiration to Jesus, whatever their theological opinions may be; agreeing that, if we each could live the life of Christ, if the world were tuned to the spirit of Christ, nothing better could be conceived. This recognition of the moral sovereignty of Christ by the best minds of many faiths is very beautiful. But the fact that He attracts the pure in heart in all nations, religions, and social conditions; that the truth and tenderness of His words and deeds appeal to men who are as far from one another, on other grounds, as the East is from the West, forces upon us the enquiry: Is He not more than man? Does not the historical fact of Christ carry with it conclusions that open the most fundamental questions of religion? I have alluded to the generous appreciation of the ethical teachings of Christ, now happily common in the East, that I might more clearly discriminate between the homage readily given to Jesus as one of many great human leaders, and the high truth which conditions essential Christianity; that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Manifestation of the Eternal Principle of Sonship that is in the Deity, and that the purpose of this Manifestation is not the founding of a sect, but the redemption of the whole world. This being the point of view from which I shall present the Incarnation of Christ in the succeding lectures, it becomes unnecessary to do any one of three things: to consider the antecedent possibility of an Incarnation of the Divine; or to debate the relative merits of character as between Christ and the incarnations

cherished by other faiths; or to attempt to explain away the points of similitude between some religious traditions of India, and the words and deeds of the Founder of Christianity.

As to the antecedent possibility of Divine Incarnation, he must have remained strangely ignorant of the most precious beliefs of India who does not know how imbedded in the religious consciousness is the doctrine of incarnation. As to the relative merits of character in Christ and other saintly leaders of the East, I am but too ready to acknowledge all that can be known of sublimity, patience, or love in the lives that are most dear to my fellow men. As to the resemblance between some religious traditions of India and the words and deeds of Christ, I welcome them. If one has in one's heart a true love for others, what can be more gladdening than to be assured that, in lands where Christ's blessed feet never trod in the days of His flesh, there have been souls that shone with Christ-like radiance amid the shadows of earth's grief and pain?

The proposition that I wish to present, and that I merely open in this concluding part of my present lecture, is not one that looks to the rivalry of faiths and the exaltation of one by the discrediting of others. In such discussions I take no interest. I am not here to make dogmatic assertions, alike irritating and unprofitable. I am here to enquire whether there is, or is not, that in Christianity which is of universal significance; whether it is, or is not, a Revelation of God of equal interest to all men, because it recognises the solemn realities of spiritual longing and aspiration that appear in all the highest forms of religion, and gives to the one great, yearning heart of humanity an answer that alleviates the mystery of life; that satisfies and inspires the soul; that imparts to personality a

new meaning, and supplies to effort a new motive. Truthfully can I say that my interest in Christianity is not a selfish or sectarian interest, I believe it; I love it; I think it worth while to travel across the world for the purpose of expounding it, not because of what it means to me personally, nor because it is the faith of my fathers, but solely because I trust that it is of universal significance, and not mine, or for me, in any sense in which it is not my brother's and for him. I love it because I have no proprietary rights in it and no sectarian claim upon its benefits. I love it as I love sunshine and clear air, and all the gifts of God that belong to no one, simply because they belong to all. I love it as I love liberty and progress and the rights of men; because these are universals and not particulars. I love it because I believe that, essentially, all men are one in their fundamental feelings, needs, and aspirations; and because what so completely meets the fundamental needs and answers the the deepest aspirations of some seems as if it must be meant for all; as if it must be the thing that has come at last, after ages of human hope and fear, from the Heart of the Good God to satisfy the yearnings and uplift the hopes of all His children; as if it must be the crown and consummation of all religion, the common goal to which our many upward paths have tended, the "one, far off, Divine Event, toward which the whole creation moves."

I have the more courage to speak thus because India ever has been the home of thought, where are welcomed all serious students of the ultimate problems of life. "In no other country," says a great Western scholar, "do we find so universally diffused among all classes of the people so earnest a spirit of enquiry, so impartial and deep a respect for all who are teachers, however contradictory

their doctrines may be."[1] In such an atmosphere all truth-seekers are brethren; and whatsoever anyone may say is weighed by all, to see if it contain aught that can interpret the mystery of life. The whole world is grappling with the problem of existence and suffering under its burden of destiny. At the heart of the great pre-Christian religions is sorrow—the sorrow of being at the mercy of forces that whirl one relentlessly upon the wheel of life.[2] The yearning of the great pre-Christian religions is escape—salvation by deliverance from the burden of life. To this escape all the ideals and ambitions of these religions point. Penance, self-sacrifice, humanitarian service, are all for this, to facilitate the escape of the soul from the thralldom of life; to fly away and be at rest; to go out into the infinite; to pass through painful reincarnations, along the weary road of self-atonement, leading at last to inward peace and unruffled joy.

These conceptions have in them the note of universality. Beneath ethnic differentiations they contain great aspects of experience common to all men. And by their sad consistency in treating man as the hopeless object of forces with which he cannot cope and from which he longs to escape, they testify to the one profoundest deficiency in human life—the lack of power. Who does not long for power—to be something more than the passive slave of life, something more than a struggling swimmer in the ocean of overwhelming fatality? Who does not dream sometimes of being as one of the gods—to create; to do; to accomplish; to turn life into action, fruitful, blessed action; not mere endurance, praying for escape? The Incarnation of the Son of God is the answer given at length to this yearning of humanity. In Christ God

[1] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 26. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

appears, to bring new truth to light; truth of which many beforetime had prophetic glimpses; for which the world was waiting, as the sick wait for the morning; but which is declared and consummated only in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. What the world has lacked has been power to cope with the mystery of existence, and to overcome the forces that are making existence a weary round of sorrow and discouragement. Christianity's message is the message of power; power that can make all things new; power that can give a new meaning and outlook to life itself; power that can create in man a new purpose and clothe him with an immediate and joyful salvation, so that he need no longer look upon the world with despair, nor feel that he is condemned to pay the penalty of his errours in long and painful reincarnations, but can be brought now into immediate union with God, and invested with the power of an indissoluble life.

But, in order to receive the gift of power, one must first understand the conditions existing in the world that prevent power and make man the passive slave of hindering forces. Are they essential conditions? Is it normal that man shall be passive? Is this all that our present life means, the pitiless revolution of a wheel of destiny? Or is this helplessness of man a perversion of the normal order, produced by causes that can be known and conquered? Until the Incarnation of the Son of God, men had worked at that question, to reach only the answer of pessimism: Life a mere treadmill, a weary path; Man a poor pilgrim; struggling through the world, seeking escape by a salvation that means deliverance from life.

Then came the Incarnation, and, with it, the new answer to the problem of existence: "I am come, not to deliver you from life, but that ye might have life, and that ye

might have it more abundantly."[1] It is with this message that I would deal in the remaining lectures of this course; not with superficial comparisons of Christ and other world-leaders; not with controversial intricacies of doctrine; but with things far greater; things universal, human. Does Christ bring that for which the ages have been searching? Does He redeem man by redeeming life, by making life a new thing? Does he give power that all men can use and by which life is changed for all men, Eastern or Western?

These are the questions upon which Christianity stands or falls as a message of universal import. And these are the questions that are met and answered in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and there only. In the remaining lectures I shall attempt to set before you the answers that issue from the Incarnation of Christ. I shall seek to show that it may be regarded as a revelation of the character of God, whereby we know that it is nothing in God that is holding the world back. He is not against man. He is not indifferent, nor vindictive, nor capricious. He is all that love can be. I shall seek to show that the Incarnation may be looked on as a revelation of the Ideal Life; of what man is meant to be; not a sorrowing helpless creature, but a strong son of God; not a self-centred creature, but a minister of helpfulness inspired by holy love for others. I shall seek to show that the Incarnation reveals the love of God, in the terms of suffering and sacrifice; and that salvation, seen in the light of that Incarnate Sacrifice, means, not escape from life, but deliverance from sin, which curses life and holds it down; and the restoration of life to its normal uses and powers in immediate union with the life of God.

[1] *Cf.* John 10:10.

## FOURTH LECTURE

### THE SIN OF MAN AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST INTERPRETED BY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

We have reached, in the discussion of our subject, that most vital stage of the argument where the moral relations of Christianity to the lives of men must engage our attention, and the problems of evil and good must be considered. I have to speak therefore of the *Sin of Man and the Sacrifice of Christ.*

When, more than three years ago, I was appointed to this Lectureship, I entered upon the long and arduous course of preparation in an attitude of reverence toward non-Christian faiths. I desired to be a humble learner from systems of belief that commanded the allegiance of immense numbers of my fellow-men, and that represented the insight, research, and aspiration of long lines of eminent and saintly personages. I believed that such an attitude was in accord with the Spirit of Christ, and becoming on the part of the seeker for truth. The results have more than justified my anticipations. Some of the religious conceptions of non-Christian faiths have impressed themselves upon me by their majestic proportions; and some have presented nobler embodiments of certain fundamental ideas of Christianity than one finds in the conventional Christian thought of the West. From time to time, in this course of preparation, the conviction has recurred with increasing definiteness that the East could, if it would, give more adequate expression to Christianity than the West ever has given; that India might, if it would, express the innermost secret of Christ with an exaltation of tone, an emancipation from the

thralldom of things visible, a grasp on the eternal, the invisible, the imperishable, never yet attained by the average thought of Europe and America. Firmly I believe that the greatness of essential Christianity not yet has adequately been expressed, and never can be, until the East co-operates in that expression and, as the teacher of the West, contributes elements of thought and feeling comparatively lacking there.

Such being my attitude toward non-Christian beliefs, it is not surprising that I am indebted to them for certain suggestions in connection with my present attempt to speak of sin from a Christian point of view. Gratefully I acknowledge that the influence of Eastern thought has enlarged my own view of the scope and content of Christian truth, and has deepened my conviction of its intrinsic universality, and of the inestimable service in the interpretation of it that may be rendered by Oriental philosophy and Oriental example, should the East ever join the West in acknowledging the world-wide relationship of Jesus Christ.

The Christian religion is one with other forms of faith in recognising the fact of sin and in dealing with it. Many religions recognise sin. The conceptions of its nature, the theories of its results, the methods of dealing with it, vary; the fact is one. An American writer has said: "Sin gives to life its deepest tragic quality. The amount of evil that a study of familiar facts would bring to light is utterly appalling. It is true that much good would also be found, and that the responsibility of the evil is often divided between him who commits it and the ancestors who have made him what he is. It is true also that some part of the evil that is commonly called sin is rightly chargeable to imperfection or immaturity, or igno-

rance; nevertheless observation shows that sin is the abiding habit of the race. Beginning without theory or special definition, we find moral evil characteristic of mankind. Even if we never learned the origin of sin and were always uncertain about the philosophy of it, these facts would remain. Sin is an observed fact. Theology encounters it not as an element in some theory, but as a vast and terrible reality. Many Christians think of sin chiefly as a matter of doctrine or as a truth opened to us by revelation. This is a mistake indeed: sin is an ancient and ever-present fact."[1]

It is obvious that our conceptions of the nature of sin must be determined by our conceptions of the nature of God and of finite personality. As we think of God and and as we think of ourselves, so shall we think of sin. If God is not personal, but an impersonal Absolute; if finite personality is illusory and not real; or if God and self alike are delusions, and the end of existence is the extinction of a temporary, fleeting individuality, all interpretations of the idea of sin, and of the antecedent problem of evil, are conditioned by these premises. If, on the other hand, God is personal and the finite self is an actual differentiation of the Absolute, possessing the qualities of individuality, sin takes on other meanings and relations, and a study of it opens moral problems and moral possibilities that are distinctive. These are the matters with which I would deal in this lecture; approaching them in the spirit of one who longs to have the cooperation of Eastern thinkers in sounding the depths of a theory of sin and redemption which shall be universal in its application and rich with suggestion for the betterment and sanctification of life.

[1] Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 230.

The Christian Religion concerns itself primarily with the fact of sin; and its central message to humanity is deliverance from sin through a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. In the brief and crowded ministry of Christ upon earth, no moment is more distinctly typical of the attitude of Christianity toward mankind than that in which He surveys Jerusalem from the Bethany road and weeps over it. It is the beginning of the week of His final sufferings. With Divine prescience He realises that the supreme hour of the Sacrifice is near. Arrayed in the qualities of courage, patience, holiness, and love, He prepares to announce His presence in the midst of those who, blinded by prejudice, are incapable of recognising the benignity of His purpose. He approaches the city, riding upon an ass; more kingly in His simplicity of habit than if encumbered with the splendours of a royal progress. Through that strangely keen insight wherewith common minds sometimes detect truths unnoticed by the wise, the multitude preceive in Him their friend, and surround Him with touching acclamations. Palm branches and the garments of loving men carpet the path whereon He travels. Benedictions ascend toward Him from the crowd. At length He reaches the point where breaks upon His view Jerusalem, the city of a thousand divine privileges and sacred associations. Its glorious walls, its shining palaces, confront Him. But with the inward vision of His discerning spirit He sees the mistaken judgment, the perverted will, the pride, the unreality, the wrong, that dwell in self-destroying security within those walls; and from the depths of a heart that meets ignorance with compassion, hatred with forgiveness, sin with sacrifice, sorrow wells and blinds with tears the eyes of Holy Love.

Such is the tenderness of Christianity as it regards a

world endowed with divine possibilities, yet devastated by sin. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of Christianity. Like Christ, its attitude toward the world is an attitude of love, of sorrow, of redeeming effort, of immortal hope. Like Him, it desires that all men shall be saved from destructive influences and come to the knowledge of the truth. Like Him, it finds in sin the cause of life's restlessness and wretchedness. Like Him, its chief concern is the dissolution of the power of sin; the deliverance and forgiveness of the sinful; the transformation of life to more abundant self-realisation.

In order to understand why sin is recognised in Christian thought as a fact of such momentous import, one must call to mind the Christian view of God and of the relation of good and evil. The idea of God connotes in Christian thought Infinite Personality. This has been set forth at length in an earlier lecture. The Christian, like the Hindu, approaches the idea of God by the path of negation—the negation of finite differences. The first philosophical step toward God is to differentiate between Him and the transitory things that are not He. The formula "not that—not that" belongs to the one universal vocabulary of true theistic science. Pressing past the limitations of the finite, we arrive at that pure, unqualified negation which is the symbol of Infinity. But when Christian thought arrives at that pure, unqualified negation, it insists on going farther. It cannot regard an Infinite Negative as the highest possible expression of the idea of God. It conceives a yet higher expression, which is an Infinite Positive completing the Infinite Negative by differentiations within itself whereby self-realisation becomes possible and personality emerges. To think of God as impersonal essence without the qualifying attri-

butes of personality seems to the Christian to limit the Infinite by denying Him the capacity for self-knowledge and self-expression that is enjoyed by finite intelligences. The simplicity of impersonal essence, attained by the negation of attributes, is felt to be less comprehensive and all-sufficient than the wealth of personality attained through differentiation. God is conceived as realising Himself within the depths of His own infinity through those differentiations which no mortal mind can fathom, yet which mortal faith can adore as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It is by the development of this idea of Infinite Personality as the highest conception of God that Christian philosophy accounts for such a phenomenon as the finite spirit of man. The self-realisation of an Infinite God demands the existence of finite intelligences in correspondence with His own. A solitary God, who represents in his own unqualified essence the totality of being, seems to the Christian a conception that requires modification in order to raise it to the terms of infinity. An all-comprehending God must realise Himself through the outgoings of His thought upon limited beings who can be the objects of certain manifestations of love and righteousness that are necessary elements of perfect character. So man is the offspring of God: finite intelligence becomes existent, not for the limitation, but for the expression of Infinite character. Man is like God; he is a partaker of the Divine nature. Man is necessary to God, even as God is necessary to man. God completes Himself through man, as Light and as Love. Man completes himself in God; and the seal and evidence of this mystical fellowship of the divine in and with the human is the Incarnation of the Eternal Logos, who, in the fullness of time, is made flesh

and dwells visibly for a season, in form and fellowship with man. Such a conception of God's personality in Himself, and in His relation to man, invests the phenomenon of sin with extraordinary significance, and requires an interpretation of its nature that shall be compatible with that oneness of life whereby man is the offspring of God.

In order to such an interpretation of sin as these conditions demand, it is necessary also to refer to the Christian view of the relation of good and evil. I look with reverence upon the conclusions reached by the great constructive thinkers of pre-Christian faiths, who, beholding the universality of evil and its effects upon life, have sought to state the problems of existence in terms that should assuage the sorrow and revive the hope of a weary world. As, with a sympathetic mind, I study the methods whereby, in the philosophies of Zarathushtra, of the Buddha, and of the Vedanta, the fact of evil is related to life, it is easy for me to realise the value of these interpretations for those who can receive them; for in them I perceive the foreshadowing of thoughts substantially reaffirmed in my own Christian consciousness.

When the Zarathushtrian tells me of a primeval principle of evil ever contesting the principle of good, ever bringing conflict into the moral universe and into the life of the individual believer; he says that which all Christian experience verifies, from the present hour back to St. Paul, who testified, in language that might have been uttered by a Persian seeker after righteousness: "The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not that I practise. I find then the law that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me

into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"[1]

When the disciple of the Buddha, seeking along the Noble Path deliverance from the wheel of rebirth and from the sorrow inherent in individuality, warns me against the delusion of grasping after the fleeting and illusory things of this existence; when he tells me that the sorrow and evil of life spring from this grasping effort to realise individuality through attachment to worldly things; I know that he speaks truth, and interprets to me a principle that lives in the very soul of Christianity, though little understood by many of its western followers: even the transitory and illusory nature of the world. There are words in the mouths of Christian Apostles that reflect the spirit of the Buddha. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof."[2] "And those that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."[3] "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[4]

When the Hindu unfolds to me the doctrine of Karma, wherein evil is seen as the fruit and sequence of former action—a doctrine, permit me to say, that has developed in Hindu character some of its finest qualities, especially an uncomplaining submission to evil as the just reward of wrong-doing, and a readiness to face without shrinking the bitter penalty of one's former sins—he tells me of that which belongs to the essence of Christian thought. The Karma of Hinduism, "the unbroken chain of cause and

[1] Rom. 7:19-24.
[2] 1 John 2:17.
[3] 1 Cor, 7:31.
[4] 2 Cor. 4:18.

effect, in which every link depends on the link that precedes it; out of which no link can drop, for law is inviolable,"[1] has its counterpart in the ethics of Christianity: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."[2] The principle of Karma as it enters into Christianity never yet has found adequate expression in the Christian life of the West. The righteousness of cause and effect in a moral order, the justice of suffering as a sequence of sin, the nobleness of submission to retributive pain, have not duly tempered Western character nor curbed the pride of its individualism. The consequences of action sit too lightly on the Western conscience. The West needs the grave and ancient East to interpret this element of Christianity to those who long have called themselves Christian. I would to God that the East were Christian, for then at last the West might learn, by the power of a great example, to realise personal responsibility and the inevitable certainty of the wages of sin.

But while the halting and inconsequent practices of the West have but faintly set forth the scope and content of the Christian religion in its view of moral evil, I will ask you to remember that in these lectures I am not offering the West as an illustration of what Christianity is or teaches; I am not boasting of the West as the product of Christian ideas; I am not attempting to impose a Christianised West upon an unwilling or scornful East. Far higher and more rational is my effort. I am seeking your co-operation in the study of what, intrinsically, is world-

[1] SLATER, *Higher Hinduism*, p. 199 (quoting Mrs. Besant).

[2] Gal. 6:7, 8.

wide in the Christian system; I am enquiring into its practical contributions to the value of life; I am asking if its forms of thought may possibly give expression to the noblest religious aspirations of India and of the world.

To ascertain this, it is necessary to reflect upon the attitude of essential Christianity toward moral evil. It does not regard moral evil as a metaphysical necessity, inherent in the nature of things, so that the existence of evil is necessary in order to the existence of good, and the estate of sin the condition determining the evolution of virtue. While recognising that some of the noblest attributes of character may emerge in the struggle of the soul with sin, it refuses to believe that a Holy God, in order to develop righteous character in man, necessitates moral antecedents unethical in themselves, and incompatible with Divine righteousness. Nor does the Christian religion locate the seat of evil in the region of physical being, as if affirming that matter is in itself evil and spirit good. While recognising the evils arising through the mediation of the flesh, its passions and its tendencies, and while sympathising with man in his struggle to bring the imperious impulses of the flesh under proper restraint, it refuses to grant the intrinsic evil of any part of that system of nature which owes its existence to the utterly good and loving God.[1]

Essential Christianity locates the seat of moral evil in the will of man. Without too sharply sundering the intellect from the will, in our study of this subject, it may be said that the will is the regal element of personality; its existence and its force are impressed upon the individual every moment. This power "by which man

[1] *Cf.* WESTCOTT, *Epistles of St. John*, note, pp. 37-40; CLARKE, *Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 231-39; SRI PARANANDA, *Commentary on St. John*, pp. 49, 50, 166.

determines whether and how he shall act, and by which he puts forth his energy in action," commands the whole range of self-knowledge and self-expression. In the last analysis, it is not our feelings that control us; it is not our thoughts and conceptions that determine what we shall be and do; it is our wills.[1] "The willing department of our nature," says a great living psychologist, "dominates both the conceiving department and the feeling department."[2]

A brief reflection upon the will as we know it within ourselves will show the relation of the will to conduct. The freedom of the will is the birthright of the normal human being. By the same power of self-consciousness wherewith he knows himself as existing, he knows himself as free—free to choose, free to refuse, free to act, free to refrain from action. Obviously this freedom is not unlimited. While we are certain that in the centre of our being we hold the royal prerogative of determining what we will do or not do, we are equally certain that in the exercise of that prerogative we are influenced by many considerations; some wholly exterior to ourselves, some arising in other departments of our personality. We know that our decisions are affected from without by the facts of life that surround us, by knowledge that we may have acquired through previous contact with those facts, or by persons who exert an influence over our feelings or our movements. We know also that our decisions are promoted—sometimes they seem almost to be necessitated—by forces at work within ourselves: the rush of physical impulse; the current of intellectual tendency; the breathing of the Spirit of God; the pressure of the

[1] *Cf.* Royce, *The World and the Individual*, pp. 434–37.

[2] James, *The Will to Believe*, p. 114.

Will of God. These are limitations imposed upon the will; factors that make the problem of volition more complex.

Yet, in the last analysis, our wills are ours.[1] Within all limitations and suggestions, external and internal, is the royal presence-chamber of the Will, the throne-room of the volitional Ego, where the finite self asserts its right of individuality and vindicates its freedom. It is there, at that final seat and centre of personality, that Christianity locates the moral evil of human life and finds the fountain-head of sin. I have called the will the most regal element of personality. It is such because its normal function is the self-assertion of the ego. The self-assertion of the ego is not sin. It is the exercise of man's most godlike prerogative. Never are we more worthy of our Divine lineage than in the instant of volition; for in that act the finite child of the Infinite Father intuitively discloses its high parentage and corroborates its kinship with the Eternal Mind. Nor does the essence of sin consist in the fact that this ego, which on the one hand is affiliated with God, is on the other hand clothed in a physical nature shared with lower animals and containing animalistic propensities. The animalistic instincts of the human being are, in their original and unperverted forms, normal, and consistent with the highest ethical life. The morality of the will, with its two ethical products, righteousness and sin, issues not from the fact of volition *per se*, but from the antecedent fact that there is an ideal order of being, a Divine order which is the absolute standard, and with which the finite will is in a relation either of harmony or of antagonism. Righteousness is the self-assertion of the finite ego in accord with

[1] *Cf.* TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*.

the Divine order of being. Take, for example, a sin of the flesh—an illicit and destructive act of indulgence, a self-abandonment to animalistic impulse; the sin of that act is not chiefly in the temporary domination of a bodily passion, but in the self-assertion of the ego, under the influence of an animalistic impulse, on the side of that which violates, affronts, and contravenes the Divine order of being. "Sin," says one who has thought deeply on these matters, "does not dwell in the fact that man still retains a nature akin to that of the animals below him, but in this, that the nature that is akin to God yields to the nature that is common to man and beasts."[1] "Sin," says another, "is the turning of a light brighter than the sun into darkness; the squandering or bartering away of a boundless wealth; the suicidal abasement, to the things that perish, of a nature destined by its constitution and structure for participation in the very being and blessedness of God."[2]

The Christian religion concerns itself primarily with this fact of sin, this universal and perpetual self-assertion of the finite ego, as against the Divine order of being. It is a religion for the sinful, to convince them of the fact of sin; to interpret to them its nature; to announce a Redeemer and Deliverer who is able to save from sin by lifting the soul above its power and bringing man back into normal relation with God. "I came," says Christ, "not to call the righteous, but sinners."[3] "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."[4]

The point of view from which Christianity regards the phenomenon of sin is to be considered. It contains three

[1] CLARKE, *Outline of Christian Theology;* see the chapter on "Sin."

[2] J. CAIRD, *Fundamentals of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 122.

[3] Matt. 9 : 13.

[4] Luke 19 : 10.

elements: an appreciation of the Divine order of the universe as an expression of the love of God for man; an appreciation of the greatness of man as a being capable of asserting himself against the Divine order; an appreciation of the sorrowful and destructive results of the alienation of the finite ego from the benign and holy will of God.

From the Christian point of view the whole problem of man's ethical struggle, and of man's sin, rests on the assumption that God is personal and God is good. The Divine Essence is not an impersonal absolute existing without qualities. It is Infinite Life clothed with illustrious attributes of moral character: God is the perfection of self-conscious being. In Him is unsearchable wisdom, wherein is no possibility of errour, no alloy of prejudice; perfect knowledge, beholding the end from the beginning; justice, clear as the noonday, calm as eternity; faithfulness like the great mountains; holiness that cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth any man; purity that will not countenance anything that defileth or maketh a lie; power conditioned only by the beneficence of the Divine will and the righteousness of the Divine character; mercy like the wideness of the sea; love that suffereth long and is kind. This God, in whom all perfections meet, stands toward man in the attitude of a father toward a child. The love of the Infinite Heart goes out to man as that of the parent toward its offspring. The thought of the Infinite Mind on behalf of man is altogether that of beneficent desire—the will of goodness that ordains for the object of its affection all that is best, highest, most conducive of happiness and well-being. The Christian conception of Divine law is not the yoke of tyranny and oppression, the cynical statute of the selfish despot.

Divine law is the continuous expression of the mind of love; the unfolding of an ideal order, by perfect correspondence with which man shall find the clue to his own existence; the line of his own best development; the path of peace. It cannot be too clearly pointed out that this is the Christian view of God's attitude toward man. Extraordinary misconceptions on this point have prevailed. Sectarian accentuations of detail have added to the force of these misconceptions; representing God, now in the aspect of inscrutable fate, sweeping men onward by a resistless tide of destiny; now in the attitude of judicial vengeance, to be propitiated by the sacrifice of an innocent victim. Ignoring these misconceptions and rising to the truth, we find an Infinite Personality of Holy Love expressing itself through an ideal order of the universe, and inviting men to attain complete realisation and self-development through voluntary correspondence with that ideal order.

The point of view from which Christianity regards the phenomenon of sin is characterised also by appreciation of the greatness of man as a being capable of asserting himself against the Divine order. Sin, in a truly Christian philosophy of existence, is not a mere stepping-stone to righteousness, the indispensable ethical routine through which man passes from the ignorance of innocency to moral self-realisation; nor is sin a mere disease persisting in the body of humanity and prolonging its taint in the blood of a thousand generations. From the Christian point of view, sin is sin because it involves moral volition; the most regal of human attributes. The instrument of sin is that in man which is most evidently akin to God, the moral self-assertion of the ego.

If man were like the beasts that perish, he could not

sin; but, because there is in him the very seed and essence of God, because his individuality is the reflection and image of the Divine individuality, therefore can he assert himself against the Divine order. Only when we consider this can we understand why Christianity concerns itself so enormously with the fact of sin, so that it may be called a religion for the sinful; and why Christ comes, not as the leader of an esoteric cult, not as the teacher of a philosophical system, not as the high-priest of a new ritual; but as the Saviour of sinners. "This," cries the Apostle "is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."[1] Sin darkly and terribly attests the greatness of man. He is so truly the offspring of God that he can resist the Divine order of life, and misapply it to his own destruction. In the sinner God sees His own child using the regal gift of moral self-assertion in the denial of the Divine order; turning his best into his worst; calling evil good and good evil. Sin therefore becomes the central fact in human life, and the love that found expression in making man in the image of God finds new expression in the effort to save the thing made from its own unmaking.

To this appreciation of the Divine order of the universe as an expression of the love of God for man, and of the greatness of man as a being capable of asserting himself against that order, the Christian view of sin adds one further element of deep significance—an appreciation of the sorrowful and destructive results of the alienation of the finite ego from the benign and holy will of God. The essence of sin being the estrangement of man from God through the self-assertion of the human will, in a refusal to accept a Divine order of life, sin is regarded as

[1] 1 Tim. 1:15.

abnormal, as the violation of our true nature, not the expression of it. We are God's offspring, inheriting His nature, capable of correspondence with Him in will and act. When, instead of this correspondence, there are estrangement and alienation, insubordinate and revolutionary purpose, the whole order of life is dislocated, precipitating on all sides consequences ruinous and melancholy in proportion to the magnitude of the interests involved. Such is the Christian conception of sin. Sin is not a necessary part of the economy of life, the shadow cast by righteousness; it is not a mere failure to attain the ideal, a mere hereditary disease, a dreary legacy from the past. Sin is abnormality, dislocation of the natural order, lawlessness, the denial of the Divine sovereignty by the finite ego. I have been much impressed by seeing this essentially Christian view of sin corroborated by a Hindu scholar of Ceylon, who, commenting impressively on the Christian Gospel of St. John declares: "The sense of sin is the consciousness of non-conformity to law."[1]

If Christianity has any distinctive contributions to make to the religious experience of the world, surely one of them is its revelation of the nature and effects of sin. I respect all that the non-Christian faiths have contributed to this subject; doubtless every point of view may discover some new aspect of a theme so vast, but it seems to me that the unfoldings of Christianity concerning sin, the light they throw on some of the darkest problems of mortal existence, and the verifications of those unfoldings through the experience of innumerable Christians, are worthy of unprejudiced examination by all who feel the sorrow of human life and long for its

[1] Sri Parananda, *Commentary on St. John's Gospel*, p. 50.

alleviation. Christianity, starting from the premise that sin is an abnormal estrangement of the finite ego from the Infinite Self, discovers that sin becomes more than a succession of acts of erroneous self-assertion; it may deepen into a permanent attitude of the will; a constitutional state of character; a deliberate and habitual alienation from the life of God. It finds that that alienation may pass from non-repentance to insensibility; the conscience being seared as with a hot iron, and the will of the ego becoming a persistent force, working for the interruption and dislocation of the Divine order. To make these statements concerning sin in a formal and academic way is one thing; to realise what they imply for the individual and for the world is quite another thing, the peculiar product of Christian experience.

For it may be said that the first stages of the Christian life involve new and heart-searching insights into the nature and vastness of sin; and the progress of Christian experience almost may be measured by its deepening appreciation of what it means to be alienated from the life of God by wicked works. If a Christian should venture, as I do at this present, to report to his brother-men some of the things made clear to him by experience concerning the nature of sin, it must not be supposed that he is claiming either superior knowledge or superior sanctity. On the contrary, in so far as his Christian experience has been real, it has destroyed within him all sense of personal merit; has deepened his feeling of unworthiness; has rebuked his religious pride; has chastened and subdued his spirit; has brought him in contrition and submission to the feet of Christ, the Redeemer of the sinful.

Perhaps the first effect of Christianity upon one who

receives its message concerning sin is to differentiate sin from outward and ceremonial uncleanness, and to locate it in the very citadel of selfhood, as a moral self-assertion of the ego against the holy will of God. Christianity by no means despises ceremonial propriety, nor denies that one may find moral inspiration in conformity to the outward letter of a ritual law; yet one of the most explicit teachings of Christ is that ceremonial propriety is but the outward means to the inward and spiritual end, and that sin and righteousness exist in the inward life toward God. Sternly He rebukes the Pharisees who had lost the inward sense of right in the outward function of ritual: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin and have left undone the weightier matters of the law; judgment and mercy and faith; but these ye ought to have done and not to have left the other undone."[1]

When this transfer of the idea of sin from the outward to the inward life has taken place, then begin in the soul of a man the unfoldings of Christianity as to the nature and effects of moral evil. The essence of sin having been realised as the self-assertion of the finite will against the Divine order of life, the significance of that erroneous self-assertion is made plain by the Spirit of God to the awakened conscience and the illuminated mind. Sin is seen in its relation to God; in its relation to self; in its relation to society. The act and the attitude of human sin bring the sinner into a relation with God whereof the distinctive notes are selfishness and the denial of sovereignty. Sin, in the last analysis, is selfishness—the self-coronation of the finite ego as against the all-loving purpose of God. As such it is the denial of sovereignty.

[1] Matt. 23:23.

All that God is goes for nothing at the imperious judgment-seat of passionate self-will. The far-reaching wisdom of the Infinite Mind, wherein abide the counsels of eternal perfection; the absolute righteousness of purpose, incapable of the smallest defection from virtue; the rational order of nature, conceived and ordained as the method of a successful universe; the Fatherly love, warm with beneficence and sympathy; the holy authority to guide and to govern—all of these are over-weighed by passionate desire, all disowned and repudiated in the interest of irresponsible self-assertion. Such is the sin of the individual in its relation to God: the triumph of the abnormal. We have seen that the evolution of the finite spirit from the Infinite Being is for the complete self-realisation of the Divine nature, that God may find perfect self-expression through the outgoings of His love upon finite intelligence; we have seen that man is endowed with attributes of personality that find complete expression only in communion with God, and that the normal order involves perfect correspondence and unity of the human and the Divine. Behold then in sin the disruption of this order, the dislocation of this relationship, the substitution of a disintegrating selfishness for the correspondence of love.

Sin is revealed through Christian experience in its relation to the sinner himself, as well as in its relation to God. The incentive to sin is some supposed good. When the finite ego asserts itself in moral choices that violate the Divine order of life, it does so because influences acting from within or from without have made suggestions sufficiently powerful to induce the repudiation of that Divine order. A life wherein sin has become more than an occasional act, even a quality of character, a

constitutional mental attitude, learns to call evil its good; to love darkness rather than light; to confirm by innumerable repetitions its rejection of the Divine order; to harden its heart against God. But when the power of essential Christianity lays hold of such a life, a mighty self-revelation ensues; the soul long dead in trespasses awakes to righteousness; scales fall from the moral vision; and sin, which once, under the illusions of passion, seemed like an angel of light leading on to liberty, now is seen to be man's most insidious enemy, seducing him through the misapplication of his powers to his own humiliation, sorrow, and destruction. In the light of Christian experience every sin is seen to have been a blow dealt against oneself. "He that sinneth [against the Divine Wisdom] wrongeth his own soul."[1] As the essence of sin consists in the perverse self-assertion of the finite ego, so every thought, every word, every deed of sin is in the nature of a perversion of self to wrong uses, and all perversion carries with it the curse of abnormality. Sin is a denial of the sovereignty of God; but it is also an assault upon the integrity of self.

In the light of Christian experience sin is seen also as a barrier in the way of good. "Your sins," says an ancient Scripture, "have withholden good things from you."[2] Terrible verifications of that saying are made by those who, illuminated at last by the power of Christianity, look back on years of self-will, spent in the interest of egoistic ends and in revolt against the Divine order of life. The incentive to sin was the pursuit of fancied good; but, in the clearer light that attends an awakened conscience, the mad self-assertion of the ego is seen to have worked for the narrowing of life; for the dwarfing

[1] Prov. 8 : 36. [2] Jeremiah 5 : 25.

of its powers; for the shutting out of richer good and loftier attainment that might have come along the lines of the Divine order. Too late, alas! many find how much more beautiful and heroic life might have been had self-will not broken away from the Fatherly will of God to be a law unto itself; had passionate impulse not sold the birthright of a son of God for brief indulgence to be paid for in long repentance and bitterness of soul. None can estimate the good that is lost to man, that becomes inaccessible and impossible, by reason of sin. All the ghastly revenges of wrong-doing that are working themselves out in every land and under every religion, for those who have chosen to ignore the law that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, though they may be more obvious, are not more terrible than the barriers against good, against the vigour of health, and the exhilaration of righteous action, and the joy of purity, and the sunshine of the favour of God, that we are piling up around ourselves by our sins.

But, from the point of view of Christianity, the dark indictment of sin is not yet fully drawn. When we have considered sin, in its relation to God, as the essence of selfishness and repudiation of sovereignty; and, in its relation to the sinner himself, as a blow dealt at his own life, a barrier between him and good, we have not exhausted the possibilities of moral evil. Another sphere of influence remains, possibly the most terrible, certainly the most pathetic. I mean the sin of individuals in its relation to other individuals and to society. If sin were a taint within the life only of him who sins, a secret of iniquity shut up within the single soul, a story of sorrow closing at the grave and sealed up in the tomb of the dead, human history would be far less terrible than it is.

But sin is an infection spread by the one among the many; a plague smiting the innocent as well as the guilty; a curse harrowing children and children's children with their fathers' iniquity; a blight so subtle, so persistent, so expansive that communities and races and nations may reap a harvest of injustice and sorrow from the seed-sowing of unrighteousness by the hands of a few evil leaders. Men sin and repent; but the self-propagating fruit of their wrongs may be beyond recall, rooted irrevocably in other lives. Men sin and die; but their crimes survive, in a malignant immortality of consequences.

It is impossible for a disciple of Christ not to feel that the most awful and most lamentable aspect of sin is not personal, but social; not the mere guilt or the mere destruction of the actual sinner, but the menace to society involved in the presence of all sin and in the person of every sinner. For Christ viewed human lives not as detached units travelling through time by separate tracks, and parted the one from the other by invisible walls of individuality. Nothing more truly represents Christ's point of view than the dictum of one of His Apostles, "None of us liveth to himself,"[1] together with the apostolic symbol of the human body with its many members, interrelated, interdependent, every one so related to the others that if one member suffers all the members suffer with it.[2] In the view of Christ even to love God does not constitute the sum of religion. He parallels love to God with a companion duty which affirms the social nature of His religion. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength; this is the first and great commandment." "And," He continues, "the second is this;

[1] Rom. 14 : 17. [2] *Cf.* 1 Cor. 12 : 14-27.

thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1] His own Incarnation was an embodiment and an interpretation of these coequal commandments—an epitome of religious and social law for the whole world. Turning Godward, He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to accomplish His work."[2] Turning manward, He cried, in words that have done more than we know to draw the world unto Himself: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."[3]

Such being the point of view of the Founder of Christianity, it follows of necessity that sin is something more complex than the offense of an individual against God and a wrong against his own better self. Sin is a social offense; a wrong done to society; a wounding of the corporate life of mankind; a contribution of unknown magnitude to the humiliation, debasement, suffering, and evil impulse of the world.

Not that the repentance of the one who sins is minimised in the thought of Christ. On the contrary, never, in the eagerness of His love for the well-being of society, does He lose sight of the individual, however humble or however base. "There is joy," He says, "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."[4] But the penitence of a sinner, however important and welcome in itself, cannot undo the malign social consequences of a life of sin. And alas! the world is full, and for ages has been full, of sinners that repented not, but went on by every form of abnormal conduct, unbridled indulgence, unfraternal enmity, and stony-hearted selfishness, to corrupt and devastate the corporate life of man-

[1] Mark 12 : 30, 31.
[2] John 4 : 34.
[3] Matt. 20 : 28.
[4] Luke 15:10.

kind by spreading the plague of sin. Although I speak in the phraseology of a Christian, my thought is broad as humanity itself. Its truth must be acknowledged by all men of intelligence and feeling, as they review the history of the world and contemplate its present estate. There is none, be he Hindu, or Buddhist, or Moslem, or Parsi, or Jew, or Christian, who denies the social interdependence of mankind, or doubts the truth that moral evil spreads like a plague from life to life; taints with a common malady the guiltless and the unclean; hangs like a pall over West and East; presses an overflowing cup of bitterness to the unwilling lips of humanity.

Think with me this thought, my brothers; though we think in different languages, and in the terms of different faiths, still may we think together this thought; for there is kinship in it; there is universality in it; the kinship of a common burden; the universality of a common aspiration for power, deliverance, and salvation. We may phrase that aspiration variously, but in essence it is a common aspiration, and in its presence all religious rivalries should die away and we should hear one another, as workers at a common problem, if perchance any man have some contribution toward its solution that is not local and sectarian, but universal. Turning away, therefore, from our differences, rising above the disposition to assail the faith or the practice of one another, daring to believe in the essential kinship of all earnest souls, and the essential oneness of all truth, may our thoughts commune in love!

As we find ourselves in the opening years of the twentieth century since the Incarnation of Christ, we are conscious that strong men everywhere are grappling with the problem of existence. In the universities of the East and

of the West, in the press, on the platform, in the private intercourse of serious men, one word is uppermost, one theme is paramount. That word, that theme, is Life. Events and persons cross the field of public attention in ceaseless procession. They arise, they advance, they fill for an hour the public eye, they retire and give place to others, to be, in their turn, forgotten. But Life, the condition precedent of all persons and events; Life, the state of existence whereof persons and events are momentary interpretations, is the vast underlying problem, interest in which never flags. To explore the hidden springs whence it emerges; to analyse the contributory forces that make it what it is; to know the causes that determine its modes of expression, the laws that govern its functions, the ends that are served by its characteristic forms of action, the obstacles that impede its course, the ocean of destiny that awaits its consummation; upon this the strongest thought of our time is fastening its attention. But is it anything new that men should grapple with the problem of existence? When have they not done so? What age has not had its seers, whose souls were like stars and dwelt apart; whose eyes, purged by wisdom, gazed beyond the phantasmal play of superficial incidents into the reasons of things, probing the mysteries of birth and rebirth, of sorrow and joy, of death and immortality! What are the Vedas and the Upanishads and the Gita but illustrious fruits of illustrious minds that in ages past have grappled with the problem of existence? Who are Confucius and the Buddha, and the seers of Zarathushtrianism, and the Semitic prophets, but souls inspired by the One Spirit of the ever-living God to ascend into the watch-towers of contemplation and peer into the enshrouding mystery of Life! There is nothing new in the fact

that in the dawn of the twentieth century strong men of every faith are grappling with the problem of existence.

But, in this new century, one seems to hear the deepening vibration of a new note and to feel that, in ever-increasing numbers, strong men are grappling in a new way with the perennial mystery of Life. It may be said, broadly—but, I think, with perfect fidelity to the historic facts—that the prevailing note in the great thought-movements of pre-Christian religions, and, to no small extent, in certain very important schools of Christian thought, has been the note of sadness and the aspiration for escape from a present mode of existence in which evil is a necessary condition. "Since to be is to suffer—sorrow being of the very essence of life—existence is to be abhorred and renounced."[1] The thirst for existence is to be quenched; the whole energy of the mind is to be concentrated on the attainment of a future state, which by some has been contemplated as the completion of personality; by others, as its extinction; by all, as a desirable release from an evil and intolerable present. I speak of this with the greatest reverence and appreciation. Joined with this note of sadness are some of the loftiest and most tender interpretations of conduct in the present life the world has ever known; and the loftiest and most tender of them all have sprung from the seers of India.

But, as I listen attentively to the thought-movement of the present time, I seem to hear, from an increasing number of those gathered out of all faiths who are grappling with the problem of existence, that old note of sadness and that old aspiration for escape gradually and sweetly changing into a new note and a new aspiration. The new note is the major note of hope, rising in courage

[1] SLATER, *Higher Hinduism*, p. 207.

above the minor note of sadness. The new aspiration breathes itself forth in the purpose to redeem this present life rather than to escape from it; not to get away from this evil and sorrowful world, but to make this world less evil and less sorrowful, a better place to live in; the aspiration to live after a nobler fashion in the world that now is, by lifting up the masses of the people, by giving them new hope, new inspiration, new motive. I find an enormous increase of this type of thought and feeling in all lands. In not a few cases it professes to be purely humanitarian and secular, a non-religious social reform; in other cases it is distinctly religious, the application of religion to the life that now is, to make that life everywhere more worth living. Yet, as I listen attentively to that note of hope and that aspiration for social redemption, as I see men rising up everywhere who believe that life is worth living, if only it can be emancipated from the thralldom of sorrow and the tyranny of pessimism that have bound it in the past; and that the people are capable of being redeemed to better things, if only the latent spark of the Divine Nature in them can be fanned into self-consciousness; I realise with delight that, though we know it not, all we who, in common, desire this redemption of the world are, in our deepest thought, looking to One God to help us bring this thing about. By many modes of expression have our hearts gone out toward Him, yet He has understood us all; by various names have we described Him to ourselves, yet He knew the thought that veiled itself within the Name; and He, the Maker and Lover of the world, hears the prayer of hearts wherein He has planted love and hope and the spirit of brotherhood. I believe that many a secularist reformer shares in this yearning after God's help in the redemp-

tion of the world; for secularism, which is avowed reaction from God, sometimes is but the revolt of godlike hearts from the unrealities and tyrannies and inconsistencies of conventional religion; and its renunciation of these may mean only its deeper yearning after One who, behind all unrealities, remains utterly real, and, beneath all falsities, utterly true.

The new note of hope is rising as the century opens. The new aspiration for the betterment of the world and the redemption of the people swells like a tide over divisive landmarks and joins kindred spirits in the one appeal to God to help us to help mankind. It is possible to point to causes that have helped to bring about this state of feeling. Not by chance is it that the incoming century finds so many thousands of souls, representing all the greater nations and the greater faiths of East and West, filled with the conviction that the world is capable of being made better; that humanity has the right to be redeemed; that sin is the social plague that blasts human life; and that they that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please themselves. Not by chance is it that strong men everywhere, from the Ganges to the Mississippi, are taking a deeper moral interest in the life that now is and are not turning from it in disgust, to escape to a life that is to be. Three great forces—two of them positive, one of them negative—are contributing to this state of things: an increasing knowledge of better ways of living; an increasing appreciation of the value of human life; and an increasing sense of the discrepancy between what the present life might be for the masses of mankind, and what in fact it is.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century physical science, by its researches and discoveries in the

field of matter, by its applications of natural law for the convenience and protection of man, and by its disclosure and treatment of the causes of bodily suffering, has enhanced beyond computation the comfort and excellence of existence in this world. Vast fields of new knowledge have been opened and explored; the uses of steam and electricity have enlarged the range of possible action for the individual, while the knowledge and practice of sanitation and the triumphs of modern surgery point to an alleviation of human distress that may in the future exceed our present dreams. The world has become physically a better place to live in. Many evils long held to be inevitable, and ascribed to the operations of malignant fate, now are seen to be results of ignorance or perversity, preventable by the diffusion of knowledge or curable by medical skill. Many barriers to social advancement, long supposed to be insurmountable, have been swept away. The healing touch of a benign science is reaching out toward every bed of pain; and into lands and races remote from the centres of modern research the renovating influence of sanitation is projecting itself.

Parallel with this perception of better ways of living has grown the appreciation of the value of human life. The study of human life has become a science, and the forces making for the advancement or the degeneration of races, families, and individuals are being investigated and classified. The blessing of education and the curse of illiteracy are questioned nowhere outside of the zone of barbarism. Wherever intelligence, coupled with moral sanity, asserts itself, there the intrinsic value of a man's life, a woman's life, a child's life, is recognised. Not yet has the world advanced beyond the sacrifice of life in war; but the deepening horror in view of that sacrifice is

unquestionable, and the growth of a public sentiment against it is becoming as conspicuous as long since it became against the degradation of life by slavery. The coming in of the twentieth century finds the world girdled with effort to protect weakness from neglect, innocence from criminal profanation, childhood from cruelty, defenselessness from tyranny, poverty from oppression. The saving of imperilled life is rewarded with approbation and honour; and the duty of sustaining life in the poorest and feeblest of the race is made an axiom of civilisation.

But while these two positive influences, promoted by the growth of a cosmopolitan spirit (which, permit me to say, is illustrated nobly in a large section of the native press of India), have contributed to the new aspiration for the betterment of the world and the redemption of the people, there is a third influence, negative in its character, that has worked for the same end. It is an increasing sense of the discrepancy between what the present life might be for the masses of mankind, and what in fact it is. The augmented knowledge of better ways of living, and the deepening sense of the value and the sacredness of every human life, only set forth in more tremendous contrast the existing wretchedness, sorrow, and moral disability of the world. The people are not saved; sin, the potent cause of misery and degeneration, is not conquered; the plague is not stayed. Because we know so well the better modes of living and the large ranges of possibility opened to modern life through the advancement of knowledge, it seems the more terrible that incalculable multitudes live on, unreached even by the physical advantages that are doing so much for others; untouched even by the bodily salvation that means health and courage. Because we believe the intrinsic value, in the sight of

God, of every human creature that lives upon this earth, it seems the more piteous that everywhere are beings, in whom are buried potentialities of Divine communion, living and dying without God and without hope in the world. It is a thought that makes us forget whether we are Hindus or Christians, and remember only that we are men and that these are men whom we would save; and all that is best within us utters itself in one great cry to the Infinite One, whose world this is, whose children these are, that He would stretch forth the hand of love and power to save His own.

When wilt Thou save the people?
  O God of mercy, when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
  Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of Thy heart, O God, are they;
  Let them not pass, like weeds, away,
Their heritage a sunless day;
      God save the people!

When wilt thou save the people?
  O God of mercy, when?
The people, Lord, the people,
  Not thrones and crowns, but men!
God save the people; Thine they are,
Thy children, as Thine angels fair;
From vice, oppression and despair,
      God save the people![1]

As the situation outlines itself upon our imagination: on the one hand, all this wealth of knowledge for the betterment of our present existence, and all this appreciation of the value and sacredness of life; on the other hand, humanity groaning and travailing in sin and sorrow, oppressed with a moral inertia that defies all philosophy

[1] Ebenezer Elliott (1781–1849).

and baffles all science, the question forces itself on every thoughtful mind: What is lacking? Wherefore does the world remain sunken in an apathy of woe, and possessed of the demon of self-destruction, while knowledge grows from more to more, and social sympathy wells like a living spring from tens of thousands of godlike hearts? What is lacking? To that question I make answer, speaking, not with the doubtful authority of dogmatism, but with the humble certitude of experience gathered in the actual field of life itself. Power is lacking, dynamic force, to cope with this mystery of existence; power to overcome the force that is making existence a weary round of sorrow and discouragement for the masses of mankind; power to bring the world to a better state of living; power to lift things, to make things morally new, to overcome evil with good, to fight sin as the great social foe as well as the great individual enemy. From the beginning man has conceived of power, an illimitable moral and spiritual dynamic, as the most glorious of possibilities; and the history of religion is the history of his yearnings for that heavenly gift. As I review the history of religion, I am conscious of the persistence of that noble yearning; it is as the throbbing of the blood royal in the heart of man in whom is the seed of God. But, until beneath the Syrian sky descends to earth that Day-Spring from on high, who came to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace; until Christ the Very God appeared, announcing, in the mystery of His Incarnation, that the gift of power is for the life that now is, the noblest aspirations of religion spent themselves in expectation of the future, rather than in redemption of the present. Amidst many variations of expression, as the great seers

of the pre-Christian ages grappled with the problem of our present existence, the one common note was sadness, the sadness of those who dealt with a baffling and wearisome illusion, or who, bound to the unpitying wheel of necessity, must endure unto the day of their release, when the hindering bonds of ignorance should be loosed and the burden of individuality should be taken away. How deeply I sympathise with those heroic conceptions of soul-union with the blessed Brahma and with those lofty refusals to fix the affections on transitory and evanescent incidents of time!

It is evident that those conceptions could not give, and were not intended to give, a moral and spiritual dynamic for the redemption of the life that now is, and for the salvation of society from the ravages of sin. They served other ends; contributed in other ways to the needs of the religious nature; and so long as present existence is regarded as illusory, and the aim of the individual as escape from that illusion, the sufficiency of those conceptions is obvious.

But, through the operation of forces characteristic of the present age, and increasing in authority and influence every day—forces by no means wholly religious, but rather scientific and sociological—a new view of the excellence and desirableness of our present existence begins to prevail. A new appreciation of the sacredness and significance of every human life; a new conviction that life is worth living, and that every creature has the right to share in its goodness; a new realisation that sin is not a theological fiction, but a personal curse and a social plague, is spreading abroad through all lands wherever men of education and moral dignity are to be found. These convictions are taking hold with new force of the

best life of America and England quite as much as of the best life of India or Japan. They are not local or racial; much less are they denominational or sectarian: they are products of that one great commonwealth of moral earnestness wherein all true hearts, regardless of creed, language, tradition, or colour, meet one another on the basis of citizenship in a Kingdom of God on earth. There are those who tell us that there is a great gulf fixed between East and West, that mutual understanding, with community of feeling and action, are impossible.[1] I admit with sorrow that there are alienating forces at work, political and economic, to keep the East and West apart; but that there is a psychological and ethical chasm existent in the nature of things, I shall not believe so long as my heart beats its involuntary response to so much that I read in the editorials of your native press concerning education and virtue and the service of humanity. I know that there are multitudes of noble souls in India who share these convictions of the value of life, the rights of men, the plague of moral evil; and who are looking, as all good men are looking, for some power capable of wrestling with the destructive forces that oppress and devastate society; capable of lifting men's hearts from the apathy caused by sin and its consequent sorrow, and impregnating them with the elements of hope and belief in the present love of God.

It is then not an academic question, but a practical question; not a matter for theological theorists, but the affair of earnest men: Is there any such dynamic? Where is it to be found? Who has it to give? Once more I say, that to this question I make answer. And my answer involves a statement of fact that may be tested

[1] *Cf.* MEREDITH TOWNSEND, *Asia and Europe, passim.*

by experience, verified or refuted. It contains no element of sectarian zeal and no trace of controversial animus. It bears upon a matter of common interest, of common humanity—the salvation of the world from sin, sorrow, and degeneration. This concerns Indians or Japanese quite as much as Englishmen or Americans.

My answer is this, that, so far as I know, there is no such dynamic as that of which we all feel the need, no power competent to deal with the situation, no might great enough to grapple with the moral evil that is keeping the world out of its heritage of good, no force strong enough to stay the plague of sin and raise sinners into the joy and health of righteousness, but that which comes to the world in Jesus Christ and His Holy Sacrifice for man.

This, I repeat, is a statement of fact, that can be tested by experience, verified or refuted. To make this answer involves not in the slightest degree the discrediting of any other religion. It casts no aspersion upon Sri Gauranga, or the Buddha, or Confucius, or any other saintly name loved and honoured among the children of men. It recognises gratefully all that these have done, and by their influence are doing, to impart courage and consolation. It affirms only that, if, as men who bear upon their souls the burden of the world's condition, we yearn for some power wherewith to deal with that condition, some power that can break through apathy, convince of sin, awaken moral obedience, inspire hope, and lift to higher things, the facts of experience and the rational suggestions springing from those facts point to Christ, and to Him alone, as the source of such power.

As one who reveres religion in all its manifold forms; who honours the sincerity of those whose faiths he cannot share; who stands rebuked before the greater fidelity

and consistency of many non-Christian believers; I am forced by experience and by reason to the conviction that, whatever comfort and inspiration there are in other faiths, it is the peculiar prerogative of Christ alone to give salvation from sin to the individual life, and to redeem society from the moral burdens now pressing upon it. Others, as well as He, have led beautiful and gentle lives that are an example to the world. Others, as well as He, have been great teachers, whose counsels sank into the hearts of their disciples; whose thoughts glowed as with heavenly fire; whose words descend in undiminished power, from generation to generation. Others, as well as He, have wrought miraculous deeds, that drew men in homage to their feet. Others, as well as He, have laid down their lives for the truth, going in meekness and magnanimity to untimely graves, sealing their testimony with their blood. Others, as well as He, live on in the memories of their followers; their names fragrant as ointment poured forth; their influence a perpetual incentive to righteousness. But Christ, and He alone, abides, as the ages come and go; not as the beautiful memory, not as the brilliant teacher, not as the hero of a sacred tradition, but as the life-giving Spirit, present in the world, dealing with the lives of men, and day by day repeating in a thousand souls those miracles of grace, beside which the opening of the eyes of the blind, the unstopping of the ears of the deaf, are but momentary physical prophecies; even the breaking asunder of the bands of sin; the washing away of moral stains; the rebirth of the spiritual sense; the new creation of motive and impulse and aspiration; the transformation of character; the leading forth of regenerated self-consciousness out of darkness, into His marvellous Light.

I am asserting nothing that is not openly known. These facts stand in the common highway of human experience, verified in the lives of living men of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues. They came out of different races; their ancestors diverged to the ends of the earth; they were nourished in faiths, in customs, in social and political conditions, absolutely unrelated; they were aliens to one another in language, in colour, in earthly station; some were princes, some were slaves; some were bowed with the load of years, some erect in the vigour of youth; they had in common only the taint of moral evil, the torturing slavery of sin, the sorrow of an abused and dishonoured selfhood. And He, lifted up above all distinctions of race, religion, social estate, or degree of iniquity, drew them all unto Himself, and gave forth to them all the selfsame gift of forgiving love and regenerating power, whereby they became new creatures in Him, their world a new world, their hope a new hope, their life a new life.

Who else but Christ has this power today—this power which, more than all else, the world needs? Who else but Christ has this ability to confer redemption that makes the strangers or the foes of yesterday brothers in a new bond of love today? Who else can stay the plague of passion that eats out the heart of life; who break the fetters of pernicious habit and grant a liberty that is like a resurrection from the dead; who change the motives, not of an individual alone, but of an entire community, eradicating old vices of hatred and selfishness, implanting sweet desires of charity and holiness; and doing all, not with violence, but in silent gentleness, like the powers of sun and air that work the miracle of growth?

Who, then, is This that holds this power over men,

this creative authority over life? Who is This that, everywhere present in the world, does what none other does, what none other ever has done or claimed to do? Who is This that makes all things new; that transforms men into new creations, drawing unto Himself from the ends of the earth them that are weary and heavy-laden with the sin of life? Hearken to His own testimony concerning Himself: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, Which is and Which was and Which is to come; the Almighty. I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death. I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me, shall never die."[1]

He came in the fullness of time, emerging from the self-knowing depths of Infinite Personality, clothing His Essence in the garment of veritable humanity. He came, not to destroy, but to fulfill; not to trample on more ancient faiths; not to set at naught Hebrew prophet or Vedic seer; not to abolish and condemn beliefs and hopes precious to Aryan seekers after God. He came to gather together in one all the scattered elements of truth, incarnating them in Himself; to preserve and co-ordinate that in every faith which bears the eternal imprint, and gently to dissolve that in every faith which has done its work and has survived its time.

He came as the Self-revealing God, who would be known in the qualities of His eternal loveliness, that men might no longer muse darkly concerning Him as the impersonal Absolute, nor cower in dread before Him as a god of hatred and cruelty; but love Him as the Source of

[1] Rev. 1:8, 17, 18; John 11:25, 26.

love, and pour forth their hearts to Him as children to a Father, and weep forth their sorrows on His breast and commit the keeping of their souls to Him, as unto a faithful Creator. Therefore He went about doing good, bearing men's griefs and carrying men's sorrows; considerate of all weakness, responsive to all appeals, redemptive in His ministrations, constructive in His teachings; interpreting all that He said and did by the one great word: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father!"[1]

He came as the Sin-condemning Judge. The vesture of His spirit was stainless holiness; the garments of His soul were glistening, exceeding white, "so as no fuller on earth can white them." He was holy, guileless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He came into His incarnate estate to redeem sinners, and began His work by the condemnation of their sin. That which sin is, the self-assertion of the finite ego as against the holy will of God, must, in the nature of the case, be intolerable to God, alike from the standpoint of justice and from the standpoint of love; intolerable to justice because abnormal; intolerable to love because unfilial. Therefore His condemnations of sin were explicit and momentous. He condemned sin by His words. In their power of ethical analysis they were sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. They sank through the cloak of hypocrisy and struck at the heart of untruth. They probed to the depths of unrighteousness and laid bare the iniquities of intention and desire. He condemned sin by His example—not the mere negative example of abstention from wrong-doing, but, infinitely more, the positive example of filial obe-

[1] John 14:9.

dience. Obedience was His meat, the bread of service. The joy with which in His mystical Sonship He surrendered all egoistic volition was, by the law of contrast, an arraignment of man's unchastened self-seeking; an arraignment never so awful as when, in the Sweat of Blood, He prayed: "Not My will, but Thine be done."[1] He condemned sin by His Death. Led as a lamb to the slaughter; giving His back to the smiters and His cheek to them that plucked out the hair; crowned with the diadem of ignominy and exposed upon the Cross of shame; despised and rejected of men; the last sufferings of Him whose spirit was holiness and whose life was love, disclosed, arraigned, convicted, and condemned that madness of self-will in man which stops not at the denial of its best Friend, the crucifixion of its Redeemer.

He came as the suffering Saviour. He saved others, Himself He could not save.[2] He could not because He would not. All power in Heaven and on earth were His, yet Love made itself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. There was no other way, save death, great enough to express that love. In death He condemned sin that He might redeem the sinful. The Sacrifice was preventable; but He would not prevent it. Himself deathless, as the Image of the Father, in His own flesh underwent death, as the corporate Representative of the whole human race, that through death He might present himself to the Father for us. For us He died, for us He arose from the dead, that as, by His Death, we, in Christ, receive the condemnation of sin, so, in His Rising, we also should rise and walk with Him in newness of life.[3]

[1] Luke 22:42.

[2] *Cf.* Matt. 27:42.

[3] *Cf.* Athanasius, *C. Ar.*, I, 41; see also Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, especially the supplementary chapter on "The Atonement in History."

So the suffering Saviour passed to His Cross. Pain, anguish, humiliation girt Him in on every side. Darkness and loneliness opened their arms to receive Him. Yet joy sustained the spirit of the Man of Sorrows, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame; joy, that from the rending of His Life in death should spring a fountain of cleansing for all the generations of men; joy, that through the consummation of His sufferings a self-expression of the Love of God should be accomplished, whereby to melt the stony heart of human selfishness and to set its affections on things above.

When I survey the wondrous Cross,
  On which the Prince of Glory died;
My richest gain I count but loss,
  And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
  That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
  Demands my soul, my life, my all.[1]

[1] Isaac Watts.

## FIFTH LECTURE

### THE IDEAS OF HOLINESS AND IMMORTALITY INTERPRETED BY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

In the unfolding of my theme I am now to advance beyond the negative aspects of the moral problem of the religion of Christ, as exhibited in the phenomena of sin, and to consider the positive connotations of the idea of Holiness.

I could wish that it had been possible to present the subject of the Holy Life in immediate connection with the analysis of sin, and as a part of the same lecture, inasmuch as the nexus of thought is so very close. But, that being impracticable, by reason of limitations of time, I must ask you to recall the main positions of my last lecture and to make them the basis of what now is to be said.

It was pointed out that the nature of our conception of sin is determined, antecedently, by the interpretations which we give to the ideas of God and of finite personality. If God is regarded as the impersonal Absolute, and the finite self as illusory and transient, the philosophical and practical conclusions regarding sin will shape themselves accordingly. If God is self-realising, moral Personality, maintaining toward man an attitude of holy, Fatherly love; and if the finite self is an actual and permanent differentiation of God's Essence, possessing finite individuality, ethical self-realisation, will, and responsibility, sin becomes the formidable menace to life which, by Christ and by the Christian Scriptures, it is held to be. Its essence is not a necessity existent in the nature of things; an inevitable shadow cast by righteousness; a beneficent stepping-stone in the progress of the individual

from the ignorance of innocency to the experiential knowledge of virtue. Neither is sin an inherent property of the physical nature as distinct from the spiritual nature, for God cannot be regarded as the author of that which intrinsically is evil, or as the promoter of conflict between body and spirit, dividing human life against itself; and, furthermore, there are sins that inhabit exclusively the regions of intellectual and spiritual consciousness, and do not involve the physical realm. The Christian view of sin locates its seat in the will and defines its nature as the self-assertion of the finite ego against the Divine order of life. Not that this capacity for self-assertion is in itself evil, but unquestionably good. It is, in fact, the greatest and most Godlike element in man. Taken in connection with the moral reason of which it is the executive expression, it is that endowment in and through which man is a partaker of the Divine nature. This most noble capability produces sin, when, obeying suggestions from without or from within, it operates in antagonism to the Divine order of life; saying, in effect, to the holy, loving God: "Not Thy will, but mine, be done."

Such a misuse of the Godlike property of self-assertion involves man in abnormal relations to God, to himself, and to society. Every volition and act of sin must be regarded, in its relation to God, as selfishness tinged with the ingratitude and unseemliness that belong to self-assertion against wise and considerate love; and as a denial of sovereignty whereby He who has every right to determine the lines of our action is set aside. Not less abnormal is the relation in which the sinner places himself toward his own life by every erroneous self-assertion, and by the constitutional attitude of selfishness produced by repetitions of sin. He is dealing deadly blows at his

own life, maltreating the delicate organism of personality, wronging his own soul. He is, by each erroneous self-assertion, shutting out good that would have come to him on normal lines and now is stopped by his abnormality. His sin is his self-impoverishment; it is the son trampling on his own birthright, the heir disinheriting himself. It is in his relation to society that the abnormality of the doer of sin culminates. For, inasmuch as no man liveth to himself, the consequences of each self-assertion against the Divine order project themselves into the common life of man as the seeds of a spreading plague, the bitter overflow of a cup of sorrow, an ever-deepening shadow upon the problem of existence. With that problem the prophets of the greater religions have grappled for many thousands of years, and the lofty sadness of their utterances has given melancholy consolation to millions of lives, by expressing the feeling that finite existence is labour and sorrow, a profitless treadmill, a wheel of tormenting illusions, to escape from which and from the vain desire to live is the chief end of man; to melt like the dewdrop in the silent sea.[1]

But, as the twentieth century opens, there are signs in various parts of the world, and within the domains of some of the great religions, that a new day of thought is dawning for many religious, sympathetic, and able minds. What that new day may bring forth it is too soon to predict; but that its dawn is at hand will be acknowledged in certain influential circles as far apart from one another in some things as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. The essence of this thought-movement, if such it may be called, although organised but in part, is a more hopeful view of life in this world;

[1] *Cf.* E Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, Vol. I, pp 356 ff.

a conviction that it is worth living and has value for the individual, if it can be redeemed from the disabilities that beset it. In a word, the redemption of the life that now is begins to be regarded with hope by a growing number of serious minds. I have ventured the opinion that this feeling is due in part to the possibilities for the betterment and enrichment of our present existence that have been brought to light by recent discoveries and inventions. Physical science rapidly is making this world a more desirable place of residence. The feeling in question is due also, in part, to the increasing sense of the value of human life, produced by the science of sociology. The human problem is being probed to its depths with illuminating results, which are being made accessible through the growth, in all lands, of a cosmopolitan spirit. Joined with this is a marked increase of humanitarian sympathy, showing itself in an appreciation of the discrepancy between what life might be, and what, in fact, it is, for the masses of mankind. As science shows us how much of the physical evil of life could be prevented or removed by better moral conditions, the conviction strengthens that moral evil is the actual cause of the world's sorrow; that sin is the real incubus upon humanity. In this opinion there is an involuntary consensus among men of the most diverse theological views; and, as these thinkers of the new social thoughts meet, in Japan or in India or in America, they find in one another a common longing to make people better and thereby to break the moral bondage of the world. Nothing is more certain than the existence of this common longing, felt by an enlarging circle of men in all the great religions of the world, to release humanity from the bonds of moral evil that are holding the world back from rich possibili-

ties of good in the present life, to say nothing of the life to come.

I have pointed out also that not less general than this solicitude for the elevation of mankind is the conviction that power is needed to bring about that end—a dynamic capable of dealing with the situation; able to cope with the benumbing influence of sin, and to impregnate with moral feeling hearts afflicted with this plague; able to arrest the forces of selfishness that everywhere, in high places and low, are postponing the redemption and augmenting the sorrow of this present world. The practical question that confronts us all is: Whence shall this power come? Who has it to give? I have undertaken to answer that question; and my answer is being made in no spirit of partisanship. I have little zeal for making proselytes; small interest in seeing one religious sect triumph over others; much less in discrediting or dishonouring the faith of another. I share with you, my brothers, and with all earnest, open-minded men throughout the world, a love of humanity, a sorrow over its limitations, a longing for the reversal of those conditions of perverted self-will whereby men are revolting from the Divine sovereignty, wronging their own lives, and spreading the plague of evil throughout an already contaminated society. With you I pray that prayer which, in our several faiths, is one: "Thy Kingdom come, O God; Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven." And I feel resting upon myself the same duty that I conceive to rest on each member of this unorganised brotherhood of hope throughout the world, to utter his belief as to any source whence may come the power which, we all agree, is needed, to cope with the present difficulties of the world and to confer upon it the inesti-

mable gifts of moral deliverance and normal relationship to God. By permitting me to speak in your presence you have given me the opportunity to discharge this duty.

Frankly I have declared that I see no hope of obtaining for the world the power required to break the bondage of moral evil, from any other source than from Jesus Christ and His Holy Sacrifice for man. While saying this I have expressed my deep respect for other and older forms of faith, and my gratitude for their past and present good. But I am forced, not by any sectarian prejudice, but by reason and by experience, to the conviction that, while other faiths have other functions for the many-sided life of man, the function of saving sinners from their sins, and bringing them back into that normal relation with God which is personal holiness, is the prerogative of Jesus Christ alone. He, and He alone, has the power of which the world, as we all agree, stands in need. The great spiritual leaders of the ages share with Christ the distinctions of beauty of life, teaching power, the veneration of followers, and, in some instances, heroic obedience to death; but Christ alone remains, as the centuries come and go, a life-giving Spirit, present everywhere in His world, and working day by day the one transcendent miracle, attested by the experience of millions of living persons, of all nations, languages, religions, social conditions, and degrees of age—the miracle of deliverance from the power of sin; renewal of the perverted will in harmony with the Divine order of life; reconstruction of motive and transformation of character.

That Christ has this power and has it today is established by such a volume of independent, living testimony as would corroborate any other statement, scientific or historical, in any court of public opinion. The fact that

multitudes are to be found who claim the name of Christian, yet give no evidence of the spiritual power of Christ, is admitted freely and sorrowfully. The facts that many religious differences exist among sects of Western Christians, and that governments officially professing the Christian religion countenance policies inconsistent with the spirit of Christ, are beyond dispute. In view of these facts, I must refer to what repeatedly has been said in these lectures, that I am by no means presenting Western religious and political institutions as ideals of practical Christianity for the imitation of the East. I would not, if I could, impose organised Western Christianity upon the Orient; not only because it is loaded with local adaptations peculiar to the West and not germane to the East, but because it is, in various respects, unworthy to be cited as an adequate presentment of the ideal growth of a Christian society; much dross being mingled with its gold.

But these unhappy degenerations from ideal Christian conditions, by the law of contrast, throw into sharper relief the actual work of that ever-present, life-giving Spirit, the Living Christ. It goes on in millions of lives today, whose experiences of His power to do what no other being does or has done, could they be collected, would present an overpowering accumulation of testimony, created without collusion or forethought by persons unknown to one another and remote from one another, physically and intellectually. There are children into whose careless and inconsequent lives entered a power that has ordered wayward instinct, redirected stubborn will, suffused the soul with emotions of gentleness and desires of purity. They tell us that it is Christ's work in them. There are scholars and seers, familiar with the higher paths of wis-

dom, who abandoned religious faith and, contemptuous of doctrine, chose secularism for their portion. But a light brighter than the sun shined in their hearts, perception of Divine reality returned, prayer sprang unbidden, and childlike longing to live unto God. They tell us that it is Christ who has made all things new. There are men who were the slaves of sin; base instincts of the flesh controlled them; ferocious and malignant lusts made them plague spots in the social organism. Yet upon them has an unseen hand been laid, exorcising the devils within; transmuting thought, intention, desire; clothing them with a new life; making them promoters of the good that once they hated and assailed. They tell us that it is Christ who has made them new creatures in Himself. The significance of these testimonies lies in their number, their persistent recurrence day by day, their spontaneity, and their range of experience. Reason refuses to ignore them. They point to a power working along the lines of the world's greatest need, effecting precisely those results in individuals which, by the common consent of all earnest men, are to be desired for society at large; namely, the breaking of the spell of moral evil, the rehabilitation of character, the restoration of the alienated will to harmony with the Divine order of life.

This power appears to be centred in Christ. The exercise of it seems to be His exclusive prerogative. Looking without prejudice to other possible sources of similar power, we do not find it. It connects itself with Him; apart from Him it fails to emerge. One is therefore forced by reason to ask: Who then is He? He Himself makes answer in words the credibility of which, great at the beginning, increases as the passing years exhibit the undiminished fullness of His redemptive and recon-

structive power: "I am the Alpha and the Omega; Which is and Which was and Which is to come; the Almighty."[1] "I am the Living One."[2] "I am the Light of the World; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the Light of Life."[3] Into the historic life of the world He came, as we have seen, not to destroy, but to upbuild. He came as the self-revealing God, emerging from the depths of Divine Personality to incarnate in terms of manhood the eternal nature of love. He came as the sin-condemning Judge, clad in the splendours of righteousness; proclaiming by word, by example, by the tragic mystery of the Cross, that the selfishness of human sin is the undoing of man and the anguish of God. He came as the suffering Saviour, Himself deathless, as the Image of the Father, in His own flesh to undergo death, as the corporate Representative of the whole human race.

But death, while it was "in one sense the culmination of His voluntary Sacrifice,"[4] was not the final expression of the power wherewith He has taken hold of the problem of human existence, to overcome evil with good, to bring men to God, saving them from their sins. He has power to lay down His life and power to take it again. In the words of one of the most ancient Christian hymns: "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." The consummation of the Incarnation is the Resurrection and the power of the Risen Life. Having descended into the depths of shame and destruction that He, the corporate Representative of humanity, tasting death for every man, might endure and exhibit the bitterness of sin,

[1] Rev. 1:9. [2] Rev. 1:18. [3] John 8:12.

[4] FARRAR, *The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*, p. 48.

He returns, holding the keys of death, as the life-giving Christ, in joyful resurrection, that man, through Him, forevermore may have life and may have it more abundantly. Vitality, victory, hope, gladness, are the notes of His power over man. The historic evidence of His Resurrection, however precious, is but a prelude for that unbounded evidence of His existence afforded by the continuous and ever-enlarging experience of human lives. "Whatever may have happened at the grave," says one of the greatest and most cautious historical scholars of the world, "one thing is certain: this grave is the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished; that there is life eternal. Wherever there is a strong faith in the infinite value of the soul, wherever the sufferings of the present are measured against a future of glory, this feeling of life is bound up with the conviction that Jesus Christ has passed through death, that God has awakened and raised Him to life and glory. It is not by any speculative ideas of philosophy, but by the vision of Jesus' Life and Death, and by the feeling of His imperishable union with God, that mankind, so far as it believes in these things, has attained to that certainty of eternal life it was meant to know and which it dimly discerns; eternal life in time and beyond time."[1]

From this point of view, the ethical relation of Christ to the present problem of moral evil appears. He who came as the self-revealing God, as the sin-condemning Judge, as the suffering Saviour, abides everywhere in the world as the life-giving Spirit of power, to be the Type and Standard of humanity. The solution of the problem of moral evil advances as the lives of men are brought into conformity with His Life. All that is wrong gives

[1] HARNACK, *What Is Christianity?* English translation, p. 162.

place to right; all abnormality is corrected; all chains of oppression are loosed; all seeds of iniquity are sterilised; all barriers detaining men from good are dissolved, as human lives reflect the image of Christ, the Type and Standard of humanity.

Thus are we brought to that concept, Holiness, which for many thousands of years, in all the greater religions, has commanded the thought of the most illustrious minds. To say that holiness is the ideal of Christianity is to say nothing distinctive; other faiths exhibit the same ideal and produce examples of piety. It is only by ascertaining the connotations of the term, in each instance, that we discern its specific relation to life and its contribution to a solution of the great and terrible problem of moral evil; a sense of the oppressiveness of which is spreading throughout the most thoughtful religious circles of the world.

It is difficult for us, who live under the influence of modern thought-relations, to realise that, in the primitive stages of religion, even such a fundamental word as "holiness" could lack ethical or spiritual meaning. Well has it been said: "With the primitive habit of thought we have lost touch; and we cannot hope to understand it by the aid of logical discussion, but only by studying it on its ground as it is exhibited in the working of early religion."[1] "While it is not easy to fix the exact idea of holiness in ancient Semitic religion, it is quite certain that it has nothing to do with morality and purity of life. Holy persons were such, not in virtue of their character, but in virtue of their race, function, or mere material consecration."[2] "Holiness under such relations is no more

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 90.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

than an epithet of convenience to distinguish places objects, or persons reserved for use in connection with religious rites, from other places, objects, or persons employed for ordinary purposes."[1] Much nearer to many of us comes the ceremonial and external connotation of holiness as connected with scrupulous observance of the rules of caste, and of the functions of worship. As sin may stand in the thought-relation of ceremonial uncleanness, breach of rule, contact with external defilement; so holiness, the converse of sin, may signify precision of religious conduct, unbroken liturgical regularity, successful self-protection from prohibited contacts. As such, undoubtedly, it has both advantages and disadvantages, from an ethical point of view. Its strength is in its consistent and scrupulous discharge of that which is regarded as obligatory; and often the fulfillment of ceremonial duty and the solicitude to escape ceremonial defilement are connected with an earnestness and courage that are at once a rebuke and an example to others. Its temptation is to non-ethical satisfaction in precision of form, with neglect of esoteric righteousness; making clean and fair the outside of life, while within may be much uncleansed thought, abnormal volition, and unresisted moral evil. Still nearer to some of us may come that conception of holiness which represents a philosophy of negation, and reflects the effort, by self-abstraction from an illusory world, to wither up the springs of desire which presuppose reality, to uproot the will to live, to hasten release from the wheel of existence. The beautiful attendant of that unworldly life of abstraction and contemplation sometimes is a universal sympathy which, making the joys and sorrows of others of more importance than its

[1] ASKWITH, *Christian Conception of Holiness*, pp. 105 ff.

own, fills life with gentleness and compassion, leaving no room for hatred or uncharitableness, for anger or revenge.[1]

In each of the types just considered there is an element easily assimilated in the Christian conception of holiness: in that which dedicates certain places, times, and things to the special uses of religion, calling them holy; in that which recognises the importance of outward acts of worship and the value even of physical separation from defilement; and in that which, seeking to live above and apart from the vain and transitory elements of the world, interests itself in gentle and consoling ministration unto others. But the essence of the Christian conception of holiness, like the essence of the Christian conception of sin, is not external and ceremonial, but inward, ethical, spiritual. The seat of moral evil is the will; sin is the erroneous self-assertion of the ego against the Divine order of life: even so the seat of holiness is the will; the essence of holiness is normal relation to God. If one will take this thought and, entirely without prejudice, partisanship, or theological dogmatism, examine its foundations and the conclusions to which it points, I believe that every member of the great, unorganised brotherhood of love and earnestness, which includes all of every faith who desire the well-being of humanity, will see the beauty of holiness as Christ interprets and gives holiness, and will acknowledge it to be the primary need of the world. For, as I apprehend the scope and nature of the Christian idea of holiness, my reason compels me to admit its beauty, and would compel that admission, if I were not a Christian. It is, intrinsically, a rational idea, devoid of that which is arbitrary, mechanical, unreal. It is noble in its elevation; rising up to the very heights of God, and inviting man to

[1] *Cf.* DHAMMAPADA, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. X; also E. CAIRD, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 356 ff.

ascend those heights without presumption and to realise his kinship with the Infinite Self. It is full of hope, and outlook, and the possibility of happiness. It is philosophically valid, founded on presuppositions of the unity of being. It is an idea of power, connecting itself with the most abstruse problem of human existence and undertaking to contribute to its solution. It has the note of universality, teaching nothing that is divisive or sectarian, but only that which is of world-wide significance and world-wide advantage.

In this spirit of liberal appreciation may we approach the Christian conception of the Holy Life, seeking first to apprehend the foundation upon which it rests. Undoubtedly the deepest and broadest element in that foundation is the absolute beauty of the character of God. God is Light and God is Love. We have seen in an earlier lecture that Christian belief in the personality of God is an intellectual necessity. Beginning where Hinduism begins, in an approach to the Infinite by the path of negation, denying one limitation after another—God is not this, and not this—Christianity arrives where Hinduism arrives, at the undifferentiated, unqualified Absolute. But there its sense of the greatness of God forbids it to stop; for the simplicity of the unqualified Absolute, of an impersonal God without attributes, appears to it less compatible with infinity than self-realisation in the terms of infinite personality. That self-realisation, to be Divine, must be ethically consistent; a perfect Life of Truth, unlimited by any shade of errour, undimmed by any thought of selfishness. The goodness of God is the corner-stone of this philosophy. Whatever man may be, whatever mysteries life may present, God is good; in Him is no darkness at all; with Him is no variableness; from Him cometh

every good and perfect gift; even the power of God is conditioned upon righteousness; He cannot deny Himself.

Reaching this conclusion by the path of philosophy, the Christian finds its verification in history and in experience through Jesus Christ, the self-revealing God. In the Person of Christ all moral beauties and glories meet. To Him we apply those ancient words of eulogy: "Chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely." The resources of language exhaust themselves in the attempt to do justice to the ethical personality of the historic Christ. Symmetry, balance, harmony, splendour of expression, mark the outgoings of His nature. Every quality, action, word reveals a Being consistent with Himself and with ideal excellence. As an historic Person, Christ attracted contemporary attention by various notes of distinction; by the power of His words that drew, even from hostile lips, the admission, "Never man spake like this man;"[1] by His control of the elements of nature, causing men to cry out, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"[2] by the darkness and the earthquake at His Cross, that forced from a Roman soldier, inured to scenes of horror, the words: "Truly this was the Son of God."[3]

But as, in the perspective of history, we behold the separate words and actions of Christ drawn together and co-ordinated in the form of concrete Personality, it is not the sanity and sweetness of His sayings nor the efficiency of His deeds that seem most wonderful. It is the holy perfectness of His Selfhood; not that He speaks the truth, but that He *is* the Truth; not that He goes about doing good, but that He *is* Incarnate Holiness. His holiness is not ceremonial propriety; for more than once He breaks

[1] John 7:46. [2] Matt. 8:27. [3] Matt. 27:54.

with ceremonial propriety, rising above it into transcendent perfection. His holiness is self-identification with His own teachings, that "the sum of goodness is to be in right relations towards the Father in heaven; to act as He acts in the world; to follow His guidance in the heart; to merge self in the sense of a Divine Presence; to do not our own will, but the will of Him that sent us; to love God with heart and soul and strength; to love men as also children of God and so brethren, as partakers of the same inspiration and sent to the world for the same purpose."[1] As time passes away, bearing into distance and obscurity the small and great of the earth, this Holy Christ passes not away. Others who have caught His spirit and imitated His example recede, and the immediateness of their contact with us gives place to the ethereal survivals of memory. But He continues, in the forefront of contemporary experience, a present Power, a life-making Spirit, an abiding Holiness, a perpetual Disclosure of the moral Essence of God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."[2] I say then that the first and deepest foundation of Christian holiness is not some remote commandment of the past, but the absolute moral beauty of the character of God, perpetually revealing itself in the present power of the Living Christ. With a great departed Master of Balliol I affirm: "Holiness has its sources elsewhere than in history."

In correlation with this element of the Christian conception of the Holy Life stands the moral reason of man, with its power to estimate ethical values and to make rational appeals to conscience and will. It is characteristic of Christianity to exalt the dignity of man. If it should

[1] PERCY GARDNER, *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 194.

[2] John 14:9.

seem to any of my learned hearers that to attribute personal reality to the finite individual is less honourable to man than to regard finite individuality as illusion and man as a transitional name for the Absolute, it must be shown, on the other side, that the kind of personal reality attributed by the Christian religion to man does not disconnect him from God and is not inconsistent with a modified form of monistic philosophy. For man is of common essence with God, according to Christian belief; in God he lives and moves and has his being. A very ancient Scripture says of the sons of men: "God hath set eternity in their heart;"[1] and another: "Man is the image and glory of God."[2] The evidence of this community of essence is the moral reason in man; the discriminating knowledge of good and evil; the ability to apprehend, approve, and assimilate holy thought and holy action; "to judge," as one felicitously has said, "of the worth and dignity of being."[3] By this gift of the moral reason man alone, it is believed, of all the orders of being upon the earth, enjoys a certain correspondence with God that makes possible the influencing of his life by the Divine Life, in ways for which no basis exists in the case of animals. In Holy Scripture this differentiation of man from animals, through the gift of the moral reason, is made the occasion of touching appeals for his recognition of this higher life within himself. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye upon thee. Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in, else they will not come nigh thee."[4]

[1] Eccl. 3:11, R. V. margin.

[2] 1 Cor. 11:7.

[3] *Cf.* Askwith, *Christian Conception of Holiness*, p. 36.

[4] Ps. 32:8, 9.

In attributing to God and man a correspondence of moral essence not shared by animals, Christianity makes philosophical implications that lead away from one of the most ancient, most widely diffused, and most influential conceptions of religion—the transmigration of souls and their reincarnations within the bodies of animals. I desire to be understood as speaking with reverence of some of the great moral ideas comprehended in the transmigratory belief; such as continued existence, retributive justice, and the persistence of the results of our actions. I am well aware also of the respect and tenderness toward all forms of animal life inculcated by that belief, and of the repugnance with which the sensibilities of the East contemplate the wholesale destruction of animal life by Western nations for commercial purposes and the supply of food. With that repugnance I find myself in sympathy for other reasons. I believe that the almost universal Western practice of consuming animal food has clogged and retarded some of the finer possibilities of that part of the human race; has subtracted from the spiritual side possibly as much as it may have added on the physical side; has created an undesirable artificial adaptation and artificial necessity which probably, after so many generations of participation, cannot be altered, but is none the less to be deplored. I believe that the cultured Eastern mind excels that of the West in power for sustained contemplation and subtle analysis of Divine things, and it is not improbable that that clarified mentality is the fair flower of unnumbered generations of abstinence from the flesh of animals. I long for the day, when the vegetarian East shall bring the same contemplative power to bear upon the mysteries of Christian Revelation that it has consecrated so long and so reverently to the Upanishads

and the Gita. While the Christian view of finite personality, involving the self-conscious reality and endurance of the human soul, precludes the necessity for transmigration, and so takes away from animals a certain potential significance, which otherwise they possess; it is certain that the spirit of essential and non-local Christianity toward them is one of sacred consideration; that not a sparrow falls to the ground unnoticed by the Father;[1] and that the instincts, emotions, and rights of animals are commanding in the West increasing attention and respect.

But, to resume my argument: From the Christian point of view, holiness in man is founded in the moral reason, wherewith he judges of the dignity and worth of life; wherewith he knows good as good, and the Goodness of God, mediated to His understanding in the Person of Christ, as the ideal Goodness; the Right above which there is no more perfect right; the Way apart from which there is no more excellent way. From the conviction of right, apprehended in the moral reason, issues the demand of conscience upon the will; the man's rational appreciation of holiness as it is in God demanding to be translated into action by the will, the executive power of self-conscious personality.

But while, in a perfect human life, the correspondence between man and God would be constant and inevitable, as the correspondence between the burnished image in a placid lake and the sun in a cloudless sky (every element of God's Holiness being mirrored in the moral reason and reflected by the will), in actual experience, sin, the perversion of the will through erroneous suggestion, opposes that normal end, disobeying the heavenly vision, resisting

[1] *Cf.* Matt. 6:26; 10:29.

the demand of conscience, darkening the understanding with counsels of folly. Thus arises the moral conflict of our inward life, the battle with temptation, the spiritual travail that cannot be allayed by ceremonial observances nor quieted by outward works of penitence. It is the revolt of self against self; of the will, inflamed by abnormal suggestions, against the moral reason, convinced of the excellence of Christ and the beauty of holiness. It is a struggle realised by the noblest natures. Saints and apostles have known it, crying out against the bewilderment and disorder of their moral forces: "The good that I would I do not, the evil which I would not, that I do. I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"[1] The instinct of the soul in that experience is to cry for deliverance, to invoke a power not itself; for within itself abnormality prevails. The moral reason, the appointed seer of the inward life, whose function is to behold God, to receive His imprint, and to direct the will, is now defied and pinioned by the will, which, inebriated with the wine of base corporeal suggestion, commits mutiny in the sanctuary of reason. To whom then shall the soul go but unto God? Whence shall it find deliverance and the attainment of holiness but through Him who is the Author and the Ideal of holy character?

Here, then, is the third, and completing, element in the foundation of the Christian conception of holiness. Not only is there a revelation, permanently present in the Living Christ, of the absolute moral beauty of the character

[1] Rom. 7:19-23.

of God; not only is there in man the power of the moral reason, the seat of ethical judgments upon the dignity and worth of life, the mirror of Divine excellence; but, that this potential correspondence of the human with the Divine may not forever be nullified through the power of natural instincts to influence the will, making it productive of sin and sin's bitter wage of personal and social misery, there is an indwelling of the Divine Spirit in the spirit of man. The soul becomes a shrine of God, and the will, once the coveted prey of restless and inconsequent instincts, is fortified against animalistic impulses, educated in the habit of righteousness, surrounded with an atmosphere of moral incentive emanating from the life-giving Spirit within; so that a man may say: "I live, yet not I; Christ liveth in me."[1] That this condition of Divine indwelling may exist coincidently with the full possession of the rights and liberties of finite individuality is attested by experience and approved by philosophy. They that have entered into this life of holiness know it as something more than the sphere of the elementary instincts of kindness, compassion, gentleness, and patient endurance. Desirable and excellent as are those instincts, the holy life, in Christian experience, stands for more than these. They know it also as something more than the unaided action of the moral reason, contemplating and approving the excellence of God. They know it as Power, personal Power not themselves, taking up its abode in the soul, exercising its authority over the will, and establishing a protectorate of peace throughout the whole realm of the ethical self-consciousness. This is the abiding of the Comforter, the indwelling of the Infinite Spirit in the finite spirit, under the law of the unity of Life.

[1] *Cf.* Gal. 2:19, 20.

He came sweet influence to impart,
  A gracious, willing Guest;
Where He can find one humble heart
  Wherein to rest.

And every virtue we possess,
  And every conquest won;
And every thought of holiness,
  Are His alone.[1]

Such being the foundation on which the Christian conception of holiness is built, its characteristic notes of expression correspond therewith. The consideration of these shall occupy the remainder of this lecture. In preparing to state the modes in which, according to the Christian ideal, the holy life finds expression, I am entirely unconscious of theological bias. I conceive myself to be one of a large circle of men, representing all the greater religions, who in common have been led by the influence of modern physical and social science to regard life in this present world as full of magnificent possibilities, involving the betterment and elevation of mankind. These possibilities are largely unfulfilled because mankind staggers under a burden of disability, an element in which, if not the chief element, is moral evil. To cope with this evil, relieve this disability, and help our brother-men to realise the good of life is our united desire. But we lack power to accomplish our end. The inertia of moral evil is too great to be dispelled. The millstone of sin drags heavily on the neck of humanity. Who can break that inertia? Who can cut that millstone away from man and let it plunge into the depths of oblivion? I, as one of the many who ask these questions of terrible import, am giving my answer—the best and only answer

[1] HARRIET AUBER, 1829.

that I have to give. Of theological bias I am unconscious; for academic controversy I have no heart. I have only love, and faith, and a desire to help toward answering questions that press for answer, not in India alone, but in every nation, even in nations that have a thousand years of Christian history behind them. My answer contends that Christ alone has power to accomplish the end for which we all pray, and this contention is supported by the argument from experience and the appeal to fact. Notwithstanding all the perversions and accretions and spurious representations which have marred the history of Christianity, involved its good name, retarded its expansion, and arrayed many against it in deep distrust, Christ, the living Christ, goes on day by day, doing what, so far as I can learn, no other power is doing. He is doing the thing that we all want to have done: cutting loose the millstone of sin from the necks of individuals in all parts of the world, in all conditions of life; and building up, in millions of individual instances, the type of character, the species of motive, the kind of personal power, which, if it were reproduced in ourselves and in all others, would absolutely relieve the world of its disability and make of this present life a new creation, a City of God on earth.

In making this presentment I have reached the point where a brief account must be given of the characteristic notes of the holy life in a soul over which Christ should completely prevail. To this I now address myself. A holy life embodying the Christian ideal would assert itself characteristically in its attitude toward sin, toward self, toward God, toward society, and toward a future state of being.

The characteristic attitude of the holy life toward sin

is determined by the Christian conception of sin. That, as we have seen, is not identical with ceremonial pollution and external nonconformity. The seat of sin is the will; the primary sphere of sinfulness is subjective. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications; these are the things which defile a man."[1] The attitude of the holy life toward sin, therefore, involves the elements of appreciation, antagonism, and sorrow. The appreciation of sin is progressive in Christian experience: it corresponds with progressive appreciation of the character and purpose of God. As one grows in the knowledge of Christ, becoming, by the practised senses of the spiritual life, more competent to discern the height and depth, the length and breadth, of Divine love, a corresponding advance is made in the appreciation of sin. In the clearing view of the wisdom, excellence, and beauty of all that the mind of God purposes for man, one feels the malign significance of every egoistic self-assertion that resists that Will and demands the fulfillment of volitions governed by physical instinct or unethical desire. The gravity of sin is felt and understood. It is more than contact with a ceremonially defiling substance or omission of a prescribed liturgical act; more than a functional ebullition of natural impulse. It is despite done to the will of God; a dislocation of the Divine order that makes for well-being and protects the rights of all men. With the appreciation of sin is coupled antagonism toward it. This is not blind resistance of natural impulse, nor abstention from evil through fear of punishment, although regulation of impulse and dread of consequences may assist the growth of antagonism. In the holy life the ultimate foundation of antagonism is the moral

[1] Matt. 15:19-20.

reason, which judges of the dignity and worth of being, measures the selfishness that can subordinate religious and social duty to the sway of passion, beholds the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, aspires to look upon sin and righteousness as with the mind of Christ, and to pronounce at a tribunal of rational judgment the same sentence of condemnation against sin that Christ uttered by His words, His example, and His death. With appreciation and antagonism is joined, in the holy life, sorrow for sin. As the Christian views sin objectively, the bitter fountain of the world's woe, the plague eating into its life, his sorrow becomes a Christlike grief. His spirit groans within him to think of the ever-growing increment of misery, of the "hell and destruction" upon earth that are "never full."[1] Sometimes he longs with Christ to give his life for the sin of the world—a longing many times fulfilled in the annals of Christian missions. But, as the holy life recognises sin within itself, finds that appreciation and rational condemnation of sin do not at all times prevail against its deceitful entrance, sorrow becomes humiliation—the ashes of repentance for wrong done against God, self, and the world.

The characteristic attitude maintained toward self by the holy Christian life involves questions that reach to the depths of any philosophy of the individual and the world. It is not possible for one to enter the Orient in an open-minded and sympathetic spirit and look upon the practice of Yoga, or the ascetic contemplation of self, without being greatly moved. As a spectacle of religious concentration, of calm indifference to physical pain and pleasure, of transcendence over material and conventional ends in the absorbed pursuit of an unworldly object, it may be that

[1] Prov. 27:20.

the Yogi of India has no peer. But more moving than his outward demeanour is the philosophical basis upon which he stands. His interests are not in the life that now is, because this life, to him, is illusion, not reality. He is as one whose senses are withdrawn from objects of sense; whose mind, inwardly concentrated, seeks vacuity, suspension of relations, that thereby it may attain emancipation from the phenomenal and illusory self, to know and to become the Absolute Self. It is impossible, I say, for one who enters the Orient in a sympathetic spirit, to look without emotion upon the detachment and concentration of mind, the renunciation of externals, represented in the mighty paradox of Yoga—the extinction of self in order to the attainment of Self. Two thoughts form themselves as I meditate upon the religious possibilities of races capable of producing and sustaining for thousands of years the asceticism of Yoga; thoughts to which, I trust, expression may be given in this presence, without offense, inasmuch as I speak with true respect. I marvel to think of the transcendent expression that might be given to some of the profoundest principles of the religion of Christ, if natures capable of assimilating the Yoga philosophy could assimilate and, with equal power, practise a faith that holds among its most precious treasures words like these: "He that loveth his life loseth it, and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal."[1] "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God."[2] With this thought comes another: As science, physical and social, enlarges our view of the possibilities of this present life, one sees what advance might be made in the Orient toward the removal of the disability of moral

[1] *Cf.* John 12:25. [2] Col. 3:2, 3.

evil if the attitude toward self, peculiar to the Christian ideal of the holy life, could be taken in matters relating to this present world by the leaders of a race capable of pursuing the mystical path of Yoga.

The Christian attitude is determined by the interaction of the ideas of individuality, consecration, stewardship. To claim the consciousness of individuality is not to commit one's self to a dualistic philosophy abhorrent to Eastern minds and, in an increasing degree, to Western thinkers also. The essential thought in individuality is uniqueness; that each person is an expression, real and unique, of a Divine intention; that each person fills a place in the world not filled by any other, and is an expression of the mind of God not duplicated elsewhere. Such a conception of self, co-ordinated with ideas more distinctively Christian, invests life with solemn meaning and with immediate value.[1] A person is more than a fleeting apparition. Beneath the transitory form of life which to Christian as well as to Hindu seems but as the vapour that appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away, is reality, the reality of Divine intention. A man is an incarnate thought of God. And not intention only; but unique intention. By the thought of God I am what I am. In me God expresses what He expresses in no other; what, apart from me, shall remain unexpressed. This is my individuality. This makes my place in life. I may be in errour, but it seems to me that this conception of self, a positive to which an impressive negative is found in the Yoga philosophy, offers hope to the world and relates itself rationally to the present problem of the world. If our brothers are to be lifted to better things, if the millstone is to be taken away, this shall be

[1] *Cf.* ROYCE, *The World and the Individual, passim.*

achieved by men who feel that God is thinking His thoughts through them and doing His deeds by them here and now.

With the idea of individuality is joined consecration, in the Christian conception of the holy life. Consecration is the appreciation of self, by the moral reason, as a unique expression of God's thought; and it is the response of the will thereto. Perceiving the Divine origin and the unique quality of my individuality, I will to yield my whole being to God, that His intention may be fulfilled in me. But, in the attempt to carry this volition into effect, my will is assailed by corporeal and other suggestions, prompted by the instincts of my bodily self. I am tempted by erroneous self-assertion to sin against the Divine order. How shall these instincts be dealt with? At this point theories of asceticism diverge. Some say that they shall be crushed and extirpated; that even the instinct toward life, the will to live, must perish. But, in the Christian ideal of the holy life, corporeal instincts are normal, and even the cosmic body, the body of the flesh, is holy, a temple of God. Its instincts are not to be extirpated, but to be governed and guided by the higher law of the moral reason. Its care and culture are not to be refused, but maintained in all purity and cleanness, as the care and culture of that which forever is consecrated through the Incarnation of Christ. The body, as an element of the individual, is to be presented unto God, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable in His sight, which is our reasonable service.[1]

The thought of self, in the holy life, finds completion in the idea of stewardship—stewardship inseparable from the remembrance of Christ as the suffering Saviour. "Ye

[1] *Cf.* Rom. 12:1.

are not your own; for ye are bought with a price, even the precious Blood of Christ; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."[1] As we go back in our thought to find the meaning of this, I am sure that the intellectual consistency of that meaning will appear to those who, for other reasons, withhold their religious assent. From the point of view of the higher Christian thinking, the Divine repugnance toward sin finds its consummate expression in the terms of death, the Death on the Cross. Sin is repugnant to God because it is the self-injury of those He loves, whom He made for happy and enlarging correspondence with Himself. To save them from that self-injury is the mission of the suffering Christ. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again."[2] The thought of self receives its deepest tone from the Cross. The conception of individuality has indeed power to dignify life with the sense of uniqueness and to appeal to the moral reason; but the vision of the suffering Saviour conquers the heart and brings the affections to the Feet of God. Life no longer is one's own. Henceforth it belongs to the Love that speaks through Death; "the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."[3]

This analysis of the thought of self prepares one to understand the attitude of the holy life toward God. It springs out of the sense of individuality already considered. Each finite self being a unique expression of the Divine thought, an unduplicated image of God, self turns to God as the child turns to its father, obeying the law of the unity of life. A fine expression of the attraction founded on kinship of nature is given in the lines of a Christian hymn:

[1] 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. [2] 2 Cor. 5:15. [3] Gal. 2:20.

Rivers to the ocean run,
  Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun;
  Both speed them to their source;
So, a soul that's born of God
  Pants to view His glorious Face,
Upward tends to His abode,
  To rest in His embrace.[1]

It will be seen that this approach to God is different from an *a priori* metaphysical approach by the path of speculation. The intellect may exercise itself upon the abstract idea of God, may define in the terms of speculative thought the nature of a metaphysical Absolute; but this is very different from the promptings of feeling, the Godward suggestions, that press upon the will from depths of consciousness below the levels of analysis. Such involuntary desire has its true and not unworthy symbol in the fundamental instincts of physical being: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God."[2] It is different, also, from ceremonial approach to the shrine of a deity, in order that the interests of the worshipper may be advanced; for example, the approach with gifts to awaken the attention of the god and secure his favour; or the approach with propitiatory sacrifices, to turn away his wrath. So long as religion continues in the earth, these ceremonial approaches will be made; but it is to be observed that they stand in quite another category of action from the instinctive outgoing of the finite soul to Him whose Life is the fountain of its own life; whose Thought finds expression in the uniqueness of each individual personality.

This instinctive outgoing of feeling toward God is the normal experience of life. Where it seems to exist not,

[1] Sir Robert Seagrave. [2] Ps. 42:1.

hindering conditions often may be found. Some speculative or ceremonial conception of God, imposed upon consciousness by the authority of tradition, may bind the soul with metaphysical bonds and repress its spontaneity; or the habit of sin, which is continuous self-assertion against the Divine order, may create a sense of alienation from the life of God. Nothing proves more conclusively that sin is abnormal than spiritual estrangement from God. "What have I to do with Thee?" was the cry of him possessed of a demon, as Christ drew near.[1] It is typical of life, which everywhere, until the demon of sin is exorcised, recoils from God. But day by day Christ, the life-making Spirit in the world, is loosing the bonds of human souls. The spell of speculative pessimism He dissolves by the warm, intelligible revelation of Himself, while to the estranged and sullen evil-doer He advances, not with the sentence of death, but with the offer of life upon His lips. Whoever touches Him with the hand of faith is made whole. Mists of speculation vanish before the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Estranged sinners become as little children, escaping from the loneliness of wrong-doing unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. So the spirit returns to God who gave it; the being that He made for Himself ceases from restlessness, to rest in Him.

This attitude of the holy life toward God, springing from the sense of individuality, realises itself continuously in the terms of communion, whereof Prayer is both the expression and the instrument. Prayer has been called "the Christian's vital breath." The symbol is not infelicitously chosen, for prayer is the functional expression of our individuality. We pray because God is the Foun-

[1] *Cf.* Mark 5:1-20.

tain of our being, in whom we live and move. Prayer may take on forms prescribed by custom and may reflect ideas evolved from philosophy. These are externals, the husks and wrappings of a substance too vital and esoteric to be analysed. Prayer is not a custom acquired from without, but a function emerging from within. It is not even a prescription of the moral reason. We do not pray because the moral reason affirms that prayer is rational or that prayer is duty; we know only that it is an element of individuality to pray, that it is in the nature of things to pray, and that, if we should hold our peace, the stones would cry out. The verification of prayer as a normal function comes with the experience of its power. The conviction strengthens that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Prayer is not for the Christian as the cry of the priests of Baal to a distant god, who may be sleeping or journeying, and whose attention must be arrested. Nor for him is it as the act, meritorious in itself, which by repetition takes on cumulative values. It is the instrument of the communion of life, the medium of thought-transmission, the channel of Divine gifts. Its use we learn by experience. By it we speak with God, as a man speaks with his friend. In it we worship, giving to Him the consent of the will, the allegiance and appreciation of the moral reason. Through it we disburden our soul of pent-up grief and fear; of sorrow, contrition, solicitude for others. And as light, streaming from the sun, fills the well of the eye, so thought and influence flowing from the Seat of Power make prayer their channel to the finite soul; influence that builds up the inner life by inspiring the will to just volitions, that replenishes hope, regulates instinct, enlightens judgment, consoles sorrow, and often extends

its benign offices to other lives, whom, by the might of faith, we have incorporated with our own in the act of intercession.

> Lord, what a change within us one short hour,
> Spent in Thy presence, can prevail to make;
> What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
> What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
> We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
> We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
> Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
> We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power!
> Why then should we do ourselves this wrong,
> Or others, that we are not always strong?
> That we are ever overborne with care,
> That we should ever weak or faithless be—
> Anxious or troubled—when with us is prayer;
> And joy and hope, and courage are with Thee![1]

Such being the nature of communion with God, it is inevitable that the feeling which animates the Christian in his relation to God shall be holy love. That love, like much else most real and most distinctive in the life that I am endeavouring to describe, is the fruit of experience. "We love because He first loved us."[2] We have seen and felt for ourselves that transcendent Love incarnating itself in Christ, disclosing itself by the supreme test of suffering; we feel it now, in the ever-present life-making Spirit, who gives forth upon us day by day influence wholly constructive, promoting the blessedness, elevation, and efficiency of existence. Our response to this love becomes at length inevitable. We would not and we cannot withhold an answering affection. We know Him, whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to guard that which we have committed to Him.[3] And so

[1] Archbishop Trench. [2] 1 John 4:19. [3] *Cf.* 2 Tim. 1:12.

we give Him our fullest confidence; we implore His forgiveness when we fall; we seek His guidance in every problem of conduct; we count upon His sustaining grace in temptation and hardship; and when, the journey of life being over, the mysteries of the unseen world confront us, into His hands we commend our spirits. I make no apology for the unreserved belief in the Personality of God to which, by these words, I stand committed. The grounds of that belief already have been discussed in these lectures. For the present, abstaining from philosophy and speaking in the vernacular of common life, I ask only if there be not in this conception of God and in this attitude toward Him that which tends to sweeten and sustain the soul of man in the life that now is.

Such being the spirit of love developed in a holy life, according to the Christian ideal, by deep communion with God, the full significance of that loving spirit does not appear until we consider it in its attitude toward society. It is not impossible that the social attitude, the relation in which it sets man toward man, is the final test of the value of a religion. It may, of course, be contended, with reason, that the social attitude maintained by a religion depends upon its conception of the nature of man and of the present world. If, for example, it is the theory of that religion, many of whose members I am now addressing, that the present world and the individuals therein are parts of a vast illusion; that joy and sorrow are alike unreal; that the only real interest is mental concentration upon self in order to the suspension of illusory relations and the escape from finitude by knowledge of the Absolute, it is evident that the conception of the holy life may in that religion develop on non-social lines, its end being emancipation from personal bonds.

From this point of view the path of holiness may lead away from social contacts into esoteric solitude, and the ascent toward God may be measured by grades of religious abhorrence toward those far down in the depths of ignorance and illusion. If this be a principle in the philosophy of caste, it is not without logical justification. On the other hand, one of the great religious systems of the world eliminates alike a metaphysical Absolute and a finite self; maintains that all life, "whether of gods or of men or of brute creatures, is essentially and finally the same, and that each form of life is merely one link in a series of successive existences and inseparably bound up with misery; and that man's great object must be to get rid of individual existence."[1] The chief end in this religion is knowledge; not the knowledge of God in order to union with the One Self, but knowledge of the real nature of things in order to final beatitude in the extinction of desire.[2] In the pursuit of this end caste is obliterated with its logical self-withdrawal from social contacts, and, in its place, the service of human lives by kindness and gentleness becomes paramount as a means, together with purity, meditation, and noble conduct, to the attainment of that knowledge which is the condition of beatitude.

Between these two religions the attitude of Christianity, especially in its conception of the social duty of a holy life, stands in the most interesting relations of thought, yet with qualities completely distinctive. On the one hand, with Hinduism, the Christian ideal of holiness is contemplative. It is the life hid with Christ

[1] *Cf.* SALMOND, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, 4th ed., p. 30; SIR M. MONIER WILLIAMS, *Buddhism*, p. 90; BISHOP COPLESTONE, *Buddhism, Primitive and Present*, p. 114.

[2] *Cf.* PROFESSOR RHYS DAVIDS, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 100–107.

in God; the life withdrawn from the world and its illusive vanities, separated unto God, called to sainthood; looking not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen: looking for the blessed hope and the Beatific Vision, when He shall appear and we shall be like Him, seeing Him as He is.[1] On the other hand, with Buddhism, the Christian ideal of the noble path is love; beneficent, compassionate, patient, magnanimous social love; that suffereth long and is kind; that thinketh no evil; that rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; that never faileth.[2] If the Christian ideal of the holy life in respect of its social attitude were to be represented upon earth by some being completely free from local prejudice, and uncontaminated by worldly policy, it would assimilate much that others believe and practise; yet in such recombination, and with such infusion of distinctive qualities, as would make the result unique. It would be found that the ideal of Christianity is not the obliteration of social distinctions. Such obliteration, were it possible, would be an offense against reason. Differentiations inhere in the nature of things. There are diversities of gifts, of functions, of intellectual and social possibilities, running through all life, conditioning society. To obliterate them is impossible; to ignore them is irrational; to defy them is unjust. Christ sought not to obliterate them, but to regulate them upon a basis of social love. The essential spirit of Christianity in this matter is well expressed in the words of St. Paul: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers. Render to all their dues: tribute to

[1] *Cf.* Col. 2:3; 2 Cor. 4:18; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2.
[2] *Cf.* 1 Cor. 13:4-8.

whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, save to love one another; for he that loveth the other hath fulfilled the law."[1] The social order being found to contain distinctions that exist in the nature of things, the aim of a perfectly holy being would be to serve, in accordance with a principle of love, the best interests of each individual member of this complex social order. That which would make this aim of social service distinctive would be the influence of the two fundamental convictions, that individuality is real and that existence is good. The attitude toward society would be determined by the same force that determines the attitude toward self—the sense of individuality. Already we have seen that that implies uniqueness: that each person is an embodiment, real and unique, of a Divine intention, fills a place in the world not filled by any other, and is an expression, a thought, of God, not duplicated elsewhere. This gives significance and dignity to man as man, apart from the accidents of social differentiation. The human being—not a caste, not a race—would be the unit of value, because of what a human being stands for as an individual. "Every man is so related to the world and to the very life of God that in order to be an individual at all, a man must be very much nearer to the Eternal than in our present life we are accustomed to observe."[2] From the point of view of this ideally holy being whom we are describing, every man would be regarded as standing in relation to that one divine Event which implies the kinship of humanity with God; namely, the Incarnation of God in Christ.

[1] *Cf.* Rom., chap. 13, *passim*.

[2] Royce, *The Conception of Immortality*, p. 5.

In the words of a great Christian teacher, who was also a great lover of humanity: "The Incarnation is God's witness to the ideal relation of all men to Himself. For the knowledge and enjoyment of this relationship every man was created. To those therefore who have received the Christian Revelation there is in every man, no matter how mean and wretched his external condition, how feeble and neglected his intellectual powers, how coarse his habits, how gross his vices, the possibility of realising this wonderful life."[1] With this conception of individuality would be joined the belief that existence is good and not evil in itself; that man was made with an instinct for appropriating and using life, and not for renouncing and escaping from it; that this present life is a field for rational enjoyment, effective service, and the upbuilding of the splendid structure of character which has been defined as "the personality built up within by successive acts of volition."[2] It would be the conviction of this being that that which has made the world sad and life-sick is not any quality inherent in life, but removable disabilities projected upon life by abnormal relations toward God. The certainty of this would be confirmed in his mind by the historic Incarnation of Christ, as affirming man's kinship with God; by Christ's world-wide interest and affection; by His eagerness to draw men to God and His condemnation of sin by word, example, and death; and by the cumulative evidence that the Risen and Living Christ does possess power to make existence good and beautiful for vast multitudes of people. It would be obvious, therefore, to this ideally holy being that the whole world has the right to share in the good

[1] SCHMIDT, *Social Results of Early Christianity*, Preliminary Essay, by R. W. DALE, p. 17.

[2] PERCY GARDNER, *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 31.

of existence and to know the way thereto; and so, without a thought of unseemly intrusion into the domain of other faiths, without an interest in the worldly rivalry of proselytism, with the one loving wish to make men know the worth of their own lives to God, to themselves, and to their fellow-men, he would go everywhere, declaring the glad tidings of the kingdom of God in the name of Him who came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly. And if the sweetness and simplicity of his purpose were thus understood, I believe that he would be welcome everywhere, as a messenger of hope, a son of consolation.

In closing this lecture upon the Christian conception of the Holy Life, wherein I have considered as characteristic notes of expression its attitude toward sin, toward self, toward God, and toward society, it remains to speak of that which is necessary to complete the significance of all that has gone before—the attitude of the Holy Life toward a future state of being. On any theory of human personality, it will be admitted that man is differentiated from other orders of animal life by his ability to contemplate death in its relation to his present state, and to forecast the occurrence of his own death as an experience through which he must expect to pass. Perhaps every conceivable type of emotion has been stirred by the contemplation of death. To some it has seemed to be the rude interruption of life's plans, the dismal terminal of its efficiency, the fountain of sorrows, the destroyer of hopes. Others have welcomed death as a resting-place in the weary pilgrimage of existence, a vaguely blessed exit from the labyrinth of illusion, a release from suffering, a door of hope. But when, passing beneath these emotions and the human instincts that produce them, we

try to estimate the deeper philosophical significance of death considered as the final fact in our present state of being, it is evident that we must look, not upon the mere physical incident of the dissolution of the body, but upon our belief concerning the existence that follows the event, which, for want of a clearer knowledge of its content, we call Death. The philosophical significance of death can be stated only in the terms of life continuing beyond the grave. This the great thinkers of the more masterful religions have recognised.

It is not possible to state the Christian view of immortality and to point out its inspiring effect upon our present life without referring to one of the dominant conceptions of Indian philosophy—reincarnation, or the transmigration of the soul. I need not say that I make this reference with profound respect. It was said by Professor Max Müller: "The idea of immortality was the common property of all Indian philosophers. It was so completely taken for granted that we look in vain for any elaborate arguments in support of it."[1] I may perhaps be allowed to say, as a Western, that no aspect of Indian thought awakens within me greater reverence and admiration than this "unwavering belief in future and eternal life." It imparts to cultivated and esoteric Hinduism an impressive gravity and patience. Life projects itself beyond death into the mists of incalculable distance, a path too vast for measurement; if one may use Matthew Arnold's words, a task "too great for haste." The consciousness, born of belief in reincarnation, that the present sojourn within the habitable world is but one brief step in a tremendous procession of existences, issuing from the past and extending into the future, gives to the higher

[1] MAX MÜLLER, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 138.

Hinduism an unworldly point of view not far from sublimity. It rebukes the narrow, unchastened materialism that abandons itself to the pleasures of time, dismissing the problems of eternity with the shallow argument: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."[1] Such animalistic contentment with the present is abhorrent to the higher Hinduism for two reasons: it ignores the principle of Karma, consenting to live as if there were no hereafter, wherein the consequences of action shall survive and work themselves out to their conclusions; it ignores also the final goal of being, which is liberation from the finite, illusory self through the perfect knowledge of Brahma, and chooses to live as if the physical were the only real, and the unseen and infinite were figments of the imagination.

I am quite ready to agree that nothing in Christian thought is more striking in its appeal to the ethical imagination than the principle of Karma, as applied to the problem of future existence in the metaphysic of the higher Hinduism. To yield one's self consistently to its influence, one would think, must furnish complete deliverance from the base fascinations of physical indulgence, and "perpetual motive to a stern and melancholy righteousness." Whether it does, in fact, operate thus in the lives of those who live under its influence I am incapable of judging; but I agree with my learned predecessor in this Lectureship when he says: "The theory of a soul, which, at the bidding of its own vices and virtues, wanders through a multitude of bodies and dwells in an endless succession of miserable or happy states, holds the Hindu in an iron grasp which neither the lapse of time nor the change of religion can loosen. In its light life

[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor., 15:16–34.

becomes tragic; individual existence may seem trivial, but the vision of the infinite series of births and deaths, with their infinite degrees of glory or shame, all inextricably interwoven with this moment and its transient acts, may well move or appall the most realistic imagination."[1] It is because my ethical sense responds to the Hindu doctrine of Karma and acknowledges its force that I find deep satisfaction in presenting, in these closing sentences, some elements of the Christian view of immortality and of its power to enhance the dignity, sanctity, and joy of life in this present world. I am glad to believe that my learned hearers can the more readily apprehend that whereof I speak, because their own religious traditions are saturated with the conception of immortality. To get the Christian point of view, it is necessary to recall the postulates that have conditioned all our thinking in these lectures: the Personality of God and the reality of the finite individual; God, not impersonal being, but self-conscious, self-determining Life; and the soul of man, not an illusion, but a veritable emanation from the Absolute, endowed with the real properties of individuality; real in its uniqueness; each soul a unique embodiment of Divine purpose, capable of correspondence and communion with its Author. Upon this basis Christianity builds its joyful doctrine of immortality. Man is, in a sense, necessary to God even as God is necessary to man; each soul is precious in God's sight as a means for His self-fulfillment: "A communion like this is not born for death. The more profound and penetrating it is, the more complete God's self-impartation and man's capacity of receiving it, so much the more clearly is man bound up with the abiding-

[1] FAIRBAIRN, "Race and Religion in India," *Contemporary Review*, Vol. LXXVI (1899), p. 162.

ness of God. 'This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.' If man's immortality is involved in his power of knowing God as the holy and merciful One, it becomes doubly sure when God's fellowship with him has the personal significance implied in Fatherhood and sonship. The recognition of it is not an inference from that fellowship: it is a realisation of what the fellowship means."[1]

Christianity is, essentially, the religion of life and immortality—the ever-blessed life of the immortal individual. As individuality is regarded a boon and not a curse, a glad and desirable reality, and not a hindering and burdensome illusion, so the continuance and consummation of individuality beyond death in the unveiled presence of God our Father is deemed the greatest of all gifts. The gift of God, the royal bounty, is eternal life.[2] And this gift, in all its fullness of good, is made the sure possession of each obedient soul in and by Christ, the Manifested God, the Incarnate Life-giver. "I am come," He declares, "that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."[3] "I am the Resurrection and the Life; He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."[4] The continuance of this blessed life of the immortal individual is the coronation of personality. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."[5] Why is there this difference between Hindu thought and Christian thought regarding the continuance of finite personality after death? Why is the idea sorrow and weariness to the one, joy and

[1] Forrest, *The Christ of History and of Experience*, p. 15.

[2] *Cf.* Rom. 6:23.

[3] John 10:10.

[4] John 11:25, 26.

[5] Rev. 2:10.

triumph to the other? The answer lies at the very heart of our respective conceptions of being. To the Christian the soul is the offspring of God, and its individuality is not a blinding veil to be rent in twain and cast aside; it is a glorious endowment to be maintained forever. Death is but a physical incident in life. The eternal life of personality is realised here and now by the enlightened Christian. The assurance of his own destiny comes to him in and through the Resurrection of the Son of God. In Christ Incarnate he beholds the stamp of reality set upon his own humanity, so that manhood is no illusion, but a fact most precious in the sight of God. In Christ Incarnate he sees the corporate Representative of the whole human race, experiencing earthly life, tasting human death, for every man; then rising from the grave in power, bursting its bonds, casting away its cords, and proclaiming unto all, who, through holy obedience, are in union with God: "Because I live, ye shall live also."[1]

That life into which we enter after death is not conceived by a Christian's thought in the terms of reincarnation and transmigration. For him there is no painful wandering through the vicissitudes of rebirth; no laborious succession of lives to be lived, each weighted with the arrears and obligations of an incalculable past. For he has found in Christ, who loved him and gave Himself up for him, the absolution and remission of sins, and the perfect and peaceful union with the life of God. For him, therefore, the conception of immortality is a vision of peace that passeth understanding; of the forgiveness and putting away of sin through the mercy and Sacrifice of God Himself; of the liberation of the soul from mortal

[1] John 14:19.

infirmity and its upbuilding in the likeness of God's character; of everlasting increase of knowledge, unending growth of serviceable power, sublime companionship of like-minded souls, eternal intimacy with the God of love.

To Christian experience the value of this belief, as adding to the worth of existence, is inestimable. It clothes with importance the life that now is, making it essentially one with eternity. The arbitrary division introduced by physical death is obliterated, and one treads the world and takes up the duties of time as seeing Him who is invisible, as feeling the power of an endless life. The incongruity and vanity of sin are disclosed by the light of this larger thought, and the eternal worth of each word and act of purity and love and sacrifice. The dignity of conduct is augmented; the brevity of the earthly span is more than overbalanced by the eternal significance of all lofty and unselfish effort. It becomes worth while to plan one's life carefully and to live it nobly. It might be said of many who have realised this truth and have lived in the light of it:

> They dreamt not of a perishable home
> Who thus could build.

"For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."[1] And if this be the inspiration for our present state, the outlook thus opened into the future is not less inspiring. For, amidst the transitions and uncertainties of this world, where life is often as the moving tent, we look not for a weary round of rebirths, wandering like homeless birds

[1] 2 Cor. 5:1.

upon the ocean's breast, over the tumultuous and inhospitable billows of existence; we look for a City that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God:

Where light and life and joy and peace
  In undivided empire reign,
And thronging angels never cease
  Their deathless strain;

Where saints are clothed in spotless white
  And evening shadows never fall;
Where Thou, Eternal Light of Light,
  Art Lord of all![1]

[1] Godfrey Thring.

# SIXTH LECTURE

## REASONS FOR REGARDING CHRISTIANITY AS THE ABSOLUTE RELIGION

In entering upon the final lecture of this course I do not feel constrained to offer an apology for the theme herein proposed. I confide in the open-mindedness of the East not only to tolerate, but to consider, the presentation of *Reasons for Regarding Christianity as the Absolute Religion.* This confidence, in which I permit myself to indulge, and by which I am dissuaded from offering an apology for my subject, is founded on convictions of the propriety of my motives in introducing this subject, and of the fairness and profitableness of a broad discussion of such a theme by educated men, whatever may be their private religious opinions. I know that I have not undertaken this lectureship in a controversial spirit. In nothing, thus far, that has been said has there entered one conscious impulse to disparage the beliefs of others or to "dispute about words to no profit." Nor have I for a moment held the attitude of aggression, as one who, coming from the West, would impose the opinions of his own sect on men of another tradition and another training. Mine has been the ardour of a witness-bearer, speaking with joy and love the things that he has seen and heard; mine the zeal of a truth-seeker, courting the fellowship and counsel of those who, by other paths, are seeking the things that are above; mine the earnestness of a believer in the essential brotherhood of men and the universal reality of truth.

I am convinced also of the fairness and profitableness

of a broad discussion of this theme by educated men, whatever may be their private religious opinions. Even if the result of such a discussion were adverse to my own hopes and expectations, still should I rejoice in its occurrence. For, as one desiring only the advancement of truth for the good of the world, I long not for the triumph of any set of opinions because they are my opinions, but only that whatsoever is the absolute and perfect truth may have free course and be glorified, unto the liberation and uplifting of the whole world.

I propose therefore to offer reasons for regarding Christianity as the absolute religion. And I do so as presenting a legitimate religious question for discussion, assured that my auditors will accord me the privilege of saying what I have to say upon it. Where, indeed, could this question be discussed with such propriety and with such seriousness as in the ancient and religious East, the breeding-ground and home of all the greatest religious conceptions that have entered into the history and experience of the world? Repeatedly have I referred, in these lectures, to the progressive spirit of some of the Indian newspapers regarding religious inquiry, and it is with pleasure that I quote the following words from a recent issue of the *Hindu* of Madras (July 19, 1902): "The teachers of the greatest religious opinions of the world are all of Asiatic origin, and in Asia religion is a more vital force than it is today either in America or in Europe." In an atmosphere so favourable to the discussion of religious problems, such a theme as that which I have the honour to propose is not only legitimate, but appropriate. One can conceive of circumstances where such a theme as mine could be proposed offensively and repudiated bitterly; but among educated and philanthropic

men this discussion must by its own intellectual buoyancy rise above the low level of controversy and recrimination, and proceed in the region of rational investigation. If I offer reasons for regarding Christianity as the absolute religion, in so doing I invite a rational investigation of those reasons by men of learning and experience; not in the spirit of bigotry, but in the liberal spirit of brotherhood, as befitting those who have a common solicitude for the well-being of the world.

For it is an axiom among all who are interested in human well-being to desire the best and the most available things, and to appropriate them without regard to the fact that they may be in use among those with whom we are not in sympathy. This is true in the realm of mechanical invention. Printing-presses, agricultural implements, locomotive machinery for land or sea, electrical appliances, know no political or racial boundaries; they belong to the world, and the most far-seeing men in every nation demand the best machines for transacting the business of life, quite without regard to the place of their origin or the people by whom already they may be used. This is becoming more and more true in the realm of educational science. The methods of the School, the College, the University, no longer are matters of local tradition, but subjects of international discussion, comparison, and procedure. In the world-wide republic of letters there is no East nor West; no Europe, Asia, nor America; but the one brotherhood and guild of the students of education, eager to consider any method that is working successfully in any part of the world; ambitious, not to perpetuate ancestral practices, but to adopt and assimilate whatsoever makes for pedagogical efficiency. As I consider the evolutionary process which appears in the

religious development of mankind, I can see no reason why the same principle which governs the mechanical and educational life of the race should not also prevail in the realm of religion. It is unquestionable that an evolutionary process is at work in the religious development of mankind. Forces that were not generated by any conscious human agent, and that cannot successfully be resisted by any measure of conservatism, are working in the world, introducing new quantities and new terms into the problem of religion. May I illustrate this statement by calling attention to two particulars: the growth of tolerance, and the advance in the study of comparative religion?

The growth of tolerance is realised by looking backward upon the course of history and considering the decrease of wars and persecutions undertaken in the name of religion. The earlier annals of the religions of the world are for the most part written in blood—the blood of conquest, or the blood of persecution, torture, and martyrdom. Through long ages of history men of different faiths regarded one another as natural foes, to be subdued or to be exterminated. The obligation to smite with the sword in the name of religion, to coerce the submission of faith by force of arms or by the infliction of physical anguish upon individuals, belongs to the history of East and West alike; and nothing is more ghastly in the record of religious oppression than some passages of Christian history upon the continent of Europe. It is by recalling these facts that we realise the growth of tolerance. I do not say that, upon sufficient provocation, wars of religion might not again break out, nor do I forget that, from time to time in various parts of the world, fanatical murders are committed. But it is quite

certain that these sporadic instances of religious violence are condemned as abnormal by all enlightened communities, and that the world has been carried upon the breast of a resistless current of tendency far past the time when the conquest or extermination of a people because of its religious opinions could seriously be entertained by any responsible government or permitted by the world-powers.[1]

The evolutionary process at work in the religious development of mankind is illustrated also by advance in the study of comparative religion. Intolerance and ignorance are kindred spirits. The ferocity of antagonism toward the faith of another often is measured by ignorance of the content of that faith. The gulf that for centuries separated the West from the East was the lack of mutuality in the study of religions. I am bound to say that the philosophic East had in a measure explored Christianity long before the West undertook the study of the great non-Christian beliefs of the Orient. For long there was a Western intolerance, born of ignorant satisfaction with the local adaptations of a Europeanised Christianity, that viewed the mighty East from afar as an indistinguishable heathendom, an arid plain of godless superstition. But from all circles of culture that veil of ignorance is passing away; and in every seat of learning where a world-wide interest in the humanities exists, the study of comparative religion is considered to be fundamental, upon historical, philosophical, theological, and social grounds. Instead of bald ignorance of the path pursued by all the world's seekers after God except those of one's own household, in place of the daring dogmatism that could denounce as wholly false and unprofitable the attempts of generations of sages to

deal with the problems of being and to construct a philosophy of life, there is deepening every day, in East and West, the desire to understand and to compare the fruits of our brother's thinking, the grounds of our brother's faith.

It may be argued that both of these illustrations of the evolutionary process at work in the religious development of mankind point to a general decline in intensity of conviction and to the growth of a religious indifferentism to which all faiths appear alike and by which the old urgency of conscience in matters of belief is discarded. It may be said that the passing away of religious wars means that nations no longer attach sufficient importance to theological opinions to make them causes of armed conflict. It may be contended that the study of comparative religion has revealed such a measure of truth in the faiths of others as to undermine the reasonableness of believing that there is one faith which is above every faith, one Divine Name which is above every name given under heaven among men.

But not so do I interpret that evolutionary process which, like the silent omnipotence of the ocean tide, "too full for sound or foam," is affecting the religious development of the more enlightened races of East and West. I grant that decline in intensity of conviction is taking place in some quarters, and that there are large circles of culture whose confidence in their own inherited religious traditions has been shaken by influences of science and cosmopolitanism, and whose minds have not yet found a system of truth sufficiently absolute to demand their allegiance; but these facts are not adequate to interpret that universal evolution of religious opinion now in progress, of which all open minds and honest hearts

must be conscious. For I believe that never in the world's history was there a more settled conviction of the value of religion as a creative, developing, and protective force; never a more pronounced unanimity of opinion that religion—that which binds human life to God, that which makes God's power felt in human affairs—is for the efficiency and exaltation of nations and of men.

Furthermore, speaking as one more familiar with the prevailing forms of religion in Europe and in America, I believe that never in the history of the West was there a more firm conviction of the essential truth of the Christian religion. The firmness of that conviction arises from its intellectual validity. It is not the blind credulity of ignorance; it is the chastened certitude of intelligence. Knowledge is at its high-water mark; science is enthroned and sceptred in the West. Historical and literary critics, sustained by conscious integrity of purpose, have endured the disfavour of those who deprecated the scientific investigation of the foundations of belief, and, by impartial research, have disclosed the impregnable solidity of those foundations. Today educated men of the West hold the faith of Christ, not as a fragile treasure that must be guarded from the rude onslaughts of unbelief, but as a fortress built upon the eternal rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. To minds so persuaded the present religious evolution, marked by the growth of tolerance and the larger appreciation of the beliefs of others, portends something far different from a decline of conviction and a growth of indifferentism. It portends, rather, the growing assurance that in many things the seekers after God are nearer one another than they had known, and that in order to the proper treatment of the religious problem there must be a larger syn-

thesis; a gathering together of those who have dwelt apart; a more generous confidence in one another on the part of all who are athirst for God; an attempt to grasp and to interpret the conception of an Absolute Religion.

Evidently the first step toward that larger synthesis would be to agree upon the sense in which the word "absolute" may stand as the qualifying term of a religion. In presenting reasons for regarding Christianity as the absolute religion, my first solicitude is so to define that qualifying term as to avert misapprehension. The association of the term "absolute" with the extreme type of monarchical government suggests mental images wholly incongruous with my present theme. An absolute monarchy and an absolute religion are not by any possibility members of the same series of ideas. Their respective connotations are wholly different. The term "absolute," used to describe monarchy, stands for autocratic power, irresponsible authority, despotism. While, in the history of governments, an absolute monarch has from time to time used a form of religion as a channel and instrument of authority, attempting by the exercise of power to bind the conscience and coerce the spiritual subjection of men, every such association of absolutism with religious control is abhorrent to my sense of right and to my intellectual conviction of the inherently free and voluntary character of true religion. When, therefore, in this lecture I employ the term "absolute religion," I disclaim all mental association with ideas of civil government, state authority, legal control, enforced submission of conscience. I approach the term from quite another point of view, and find it available for my purpose as a term of convenience, indicating the opposite of whatever is implied in the words "provisional," "local," "tempo-

rary," and "approximate," considered as words descriptive of the various religions of mankind.

We can conceive of a religion that might answer to the descriptive term "provisional," in that it was constituted for a specific function arising out of an emergency. Its range of vision was scaled down to the end it was designed to subserve; its ordinances and ceremonial were in their nature a concession to the limitations created by the existing emergency. While that state of emergency lasted, the provisional religion, like a provisional government, would be adequate; but, the restrictions produced by the emergency being removed, that religion forthwith and by force of circumstances becomes inoperative and obsolete, giving place to one which, if it be final and adequate in all other necessary relations, may be called "absolute."

We can conceive of a religion as "local"—a tribal or national cult, springing from the soil, endeared by neighborhood sentiment, meeting the needs of those living within the tribal or national limits, yet lacking the note of universality; incompatible with the tradition and experience of a remote district; incapable of meeting needs created by other environments. If there should emerge a faith that seemed to appeal to all human life at the levels that lie beneath tribal and national distinctions; a faith that met the needs of the most remote and unrelated communities; that might be translated into the multitudinous tongues of the earth, yet ever utter itself in the one great vernacular of the soil—to such a religion one might give the title "absolute."

We can conceive of a religion as "temporary"—fulfilling an honoured mission at a certain stage in the evolution of society, speaking with voices of consolation and

admonition to man in certain phases of his development; and then in some of its elements outgrown; not discredited or disproved, but left behind by the progress of humanity; submerged by the rising tides of knowledge; superseded, as, in the days of old, Christ superseded John the Baptist, not by discrediting him, not by setting him aside, but by bringing in a larger truth that men had need of, a clearer light for which they prayed. That which thus should come in to feed the growing power of an advancing race might bear the title "absolute."

We can conceive of a religion as "approximate"—as the light of the breaking dawn, the portent and pledge of the full sunrise, the splendid forerunner of complete Revelation. Gloriously may it discharge its functions, with its seers and its saints hailing the perfect vision from afar, and confirming the faith of their generations with precept and prophecy. At last comes the full unfolding of the Divine, the Light that lighteth every man, coming into the world. In its ample glory the partial and the approximate are taken up, purged and assimilated into the perfect body of Truth, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

By these differentiations of the term "absolute" in its association with religion we come at the important thought that the most distinctive note of the absolute religion would be universality; in relations so broad and comprehensive that even to consider the theoretical possibility of such a beneficent gift to mankind is, for all true lovers of their race, like standing on some great headland of the mountains and beholding a serene landscape with all the wealth of the earth bathed in all the splendours of heaven. For the universality of the absolute religion would be more and higher than mere numerical extension. A

religion might extend until its worshippers were as numerous as mankind and yet lack the essential note of universality. The universality of the absolute religion shall not be measured by the misleading standard of millions of converts, but by its intrinsic capacity to meet the needs of man. Its universality shall obtain in other categories than those of mere numerical strength, even in its conception of God, its relation to time and place, its social ideal, and its concurrence with reality.

In the absolute religion the conception of God must contain the note of universality. No tribal or national deity or group of deities will suffice, but one who in Himself is ultimate, infinite, timeless; the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity; having the qualities of Personality that He may know and be known; in whom and by whom are all things; unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known; from whom no secrets are hid; under the sway of whose authority all worlds subsist; in the presence of whose "far-beaming blaze of majesty" all men are equal; to the all-embracing tenderness of whose heart all lives are dear; in the secret of whose purpose is the eternal volition of love that all men shall be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

In the absolute religion the relation to time and place must be universal. In the evolution of the religious consciousness of the race doubtless there is need of provisional forms of faith that arise to meet emergencies, and of local or neighborhood cults and customs that spring out of the soil, endeared by the power of association and meaning much to those who understand them. To the end of time, I believe, these local adaptations will in some form continue; they represent a psychological necessity that cannot be ignored. But the absolute religion, while

it may take up into itself and assimilate many of these, shall in its essence be greater than they. For it shall be bound neither by time nor by place. Its truth shall not be provisional and temporary, but part and parcel of the eternal being of God, and co-enduring with Himself. Nor shall its substance be of exclusive relevance for a segment of the race, a gospel for the East or a gospel for the West; but it shall be a world-message, addressed to man as man, and, whether stated in the terms of the East or of the West, losing none of its universality. Every nation and kindred and people and tongue shall claim that message as its own; every soul under the heavens shall appropriate it as a birthright.

In the absolute religion the social ideal must rise to the proportions of universality. This it cannot do unless it be founded on a conception of the value of the individual man as broad as humanity itself. For in the building of a social ideal the unit of construction is, in the last analysis, not the state, not a church, not a class, not even the family, but the individual life, with its rights, its worth, and its destiny. A social ideal can be no better than its estimate of the worth of a single soul. A social ideal that makes as its chief end the protection of a class at the expense of inferior classes, or the propagation of a system by sacrificing the weak to the strong, or by keeping down the many that the few may rise, whatever it may exhibit of the glittering attributes of power, lacks the first credentials of universality. The absolute religion must honour all men because each is a unique expression of the Divine; must acknowledge intrinsic value, and accord personal rights in connection with every member of the race. With such a foundation beneath it, its social ideal shall rise in lines of beauty exceeding the most

superb of your own architectural masterpieces. Its motive shall be fraternal love—the desire that each son of man shall know the meaning and the possibilities of his own existence, and enjoy a fair chance to compete for a share of the common good; its spirit shall be compassionate, co-operative, constructive; its aim shall be the betterment of the race by the redemption and the education of the individual.

Finally, the universal note in the absolute religion must be its concurrence with reality. Knowledge is a tide more resistless than the sea; it eats away the substance of dreams and delusions as waves devour sand palaces built upon the shores by children. It submerges barriers set up against it, closes over them and passes by them, as if they never had been. It tests every theory and every faith of man with pitiless pressure, and only that can stand in its swelling current which has deep anchorage or rock foundation. As time advances the momentum of this tide waxes. The two great augmenting forces are the historic spirit and the inductive method of investigation. Under the influence of these forces every document, every dogma, is challenged, every claim of religious authority explored, every custom traced to its source. Venerable antiquity, traditional holiness, official sanction, usage, have no power to protect any faith from this all-searching, all-enfolding tide of knowledge, which, with an impartiality that seems cruelty at first, but in the end reveals itself as love, judges between truth and errour, sparing only that which concurs with reality, that which is part and parcel of the one self-consistent truth.

And now, whilst we have before our minds these connotations of the term "absolute religion," it behoves us to ask a pertinent question: Can there be conceived the

existence of an Absolute Religion in the world as we know it? If there be reasons inherent in the constitution of the world and the nature of man forbidding the possibility of a religion that shall have sufficient breadth and scope to become a basis for the religious experience of the race, then my present discussion is purely theoretical and academical. Without doubt such prohibitive reasons appear to exist. The great religions that now interest the world long have lived apart from one another, separated by physical boundaries, or mutual ignorance, or ancestral distrust. As of old it was written of the two contiguous districts of Palestine, Judæa and Samaria, "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," so faiths more or less antagonistic than those of Jew and Samaritan have ignored or hated one another, as if their adherents were beings, not of different races only, but of different worlds, having no thought or experience in common, no affinity even of natural instinct. But the methods of modern thought forbid us to accept the proposition that these lines of cleavage in the religious history of the race close the discussion on the possibility of an absolute religion; that, because they exist and long have existed, therefore must they ever continue. The principle of evolution does not allow us to dogmatise on this or any kindred problem of the future. We must wait, and ponder, and hope. When, by a strong effort of intellect and will, we break from the beaten tracks of custom and prejudice, and climb to the heights of vision where that which is can be seen in its wholeness, and be measured by that which might be and should be, there appear to us certain grave and beautiful reasons which at least make it possible to conceive the existence of an absolute religion in the world as we know it. To present some of these

reasons for your consideration is my earnest desire. While you may reject my conclusions, I know that you will at least hear my premises.

The existence of an absolute religion becomes conceivable for those who believe, as I most profoundly believe, the essential unity of the human race, and the possibility of a true union of hearts and a mutual comprehension of feelings and ideas, between those who by racial ancestry, by language, by colour, by social institutions, by religious traditions, and by all other outward signs of difference are separated as widely as the East is from the West. Lately we have been furnished, not by an Oriental, but by a European,[1] with the pessimistic phrase, "the mental seclusion of India." He tells us that his phrase represents the result of thirty years' observation and reflection; that Indians and Englishmen are fenced off from each other by an invisible, impalpable, but impassable, wall, which is not difference of manners or of habits or of modes of association, but is a deliberate seclusion of the mind with jealous, minute, and persistent care; that this seclusion of the mind is universal, resulting in a loneliness which, increased by the discipline of ages, is not an incident, but the first essential of character. Against this dismal doctrine of segregation it is no surprise to hear such European protests as that which recently has been given in an Indian magazine by the Bishop of Bombay.[2] But it is with especial joy that I note the rejection of the doctrine by liberal Indian sentiment. The alleged "mental seclusion" is vigorously analysed, and the conviction is announced in an able editorial,[3] that no section of the human race is incapable of

[1] *Cf.* Meredith Townsend, *Asia and Europe*, pp. 146–54.

[2] *Cf.* *East and West*, July, 1902, pp. 906–14.

[3] *Cf.* *The Hindu*, July 22, 1902.

fuller intercourse with and better understanding of all other sections; "that human nature everywhere is the same;" and that, wherever colour prejudices are dispelled, there is no difficulty of intercourse and nothing mutually unknowable. Such a contention I believe to be in accord with the fundamental laws and facts of nature. The "brotherhood of the race" is, to me, not a cant phrase, but a psychological formula, representing the fact that conditions all human life, justifies those sentiments of universal love that rise in hearts emanicipated from prejudice, interprets those fine and manly affinities that make it possible for men trained on opposite sides of the globe, aliens in their respective types of culture and in their forms of belief, nevertheless to look into each other's eyes and know that in the deepest recesses of experience and feeling they understand one another and are one.

The existence of an absolute religion becomes still more readily conceivable for those who, believing the essential unity of the race, take note of the universality of religious sentiment. As hunger and thirst and the primary forms of natural affection repeat themselves throughout the world, giving an involuntary kinship of physical need to all the races, so is there a kinship of a more subtle kind, founded in the attributes and actions of that in man which we call his religious nature. The presence of spiritual ideas in human personality is universal, be they the vague perceptions of the basest savagery, or the myths and customs of a semi-barbaric state, or the highly organised religious systems of civilised races. The witness to the religious element as a necessary part of the constitution of humanity is consistent and convincing. "Religion," says Principal Fairbairn, "is so essential to man that he cannot escape from it. It besets

him, penetrates, holds him even against his will. The proof of its necessity is the spontaneity of its existence. It comes into being without any man willing it, or any man making it; and, as it began, so it continues. Few men could give a reason for their belief, and the curious thing is that when it is attempted, the reasons are, as a rule, less rational than the beliefs themselves."[1] It is when we permit the mind to dwell upon a thought like this that there comes to remembrance, unbidden, that masterful saying of St. Paul, spoken in Greece almost twenty centuries ago, but true today on the banks of the Mississippi or the banks of the Ganges: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find him, though He be not far from every one of us."[2] As I reflect that everywhere my fellow-beings are sharing with me the impulses that suggest God and prayer and duty, I find myself asking: Why should it be incredible that He who implanted these universal impulses shall at length, in the fullness of time, answer them and satisfy them by the revelation of an absolute religion as broad in its scope as the religious intuition of humanity?

The existence of an absolute religion becomes not only conceivable, but desirable, when one reflects upon the practical situation that would emerge if the common reason and judgment of the race were, through the evolution of knowledge and through the immediate influence of God, to arrive at a conviction of the universal validity and absoluteness of a certain set of religious conceptions. The thought of such a religious consensus on the part of long-

[1] *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 196. [2] Acts 17:26, 27.

divided nations and races is in itself so startling that for a time the mind is unable to assimilate it and to subject it to rational analysis. Time and usage have established the several great religions as permanent factors in the life of the world. Their histories bulk as the major part of the world's history. We cannot conceive the past development of the race except in the terms supplied by the growths and rivalries of its religions. The antecedent assumption, therefore, is that what so long has endured must continue forever; that the permanence of the lines subdividing the religious experience of the race is a foregone conclusion. This assumption of the permanence of long-established conditions is one of the most deep-seated of our impressions. Nothing offers a more stubborn resistance to the law of evolution. In one of the books of the Old Testament this assumption of permanence is well voiced by a pessimistic philosopher, who is supposed to speak: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."[1] All of which perpetually is being contradicted by the principle known as evolution, and now everywhere recognised as the law governing earthly affairs. A rational interpretation of life, individual and collective, can be made only in the terms of progress; fresh recombination of existing elements with elimination of outworn material; continuous unfolding of new conditions, with emergence of new results. The familiar maxim, "History repeats itself," has been discredited by the principle of evolution; for repetition becomes impossible where all historical elements are in the evolutionary flux. Successive events may bear resemblance, yet each in turn is new, for the conditions that produce it are new.

[1] Eccl 1:9.

Taking this into account, and remembering likewise the unprecedented growth of knowledge, of scientific method, of cosmopolitan spirit, and of international intercourse, it becomes possible to entertain and to analyse a proposition, at first so startling as to appear incredible. It may be that amidst the changes now in process—changes so great and radical that the most daring eighteenth-century social prophet could not have heralded them—the greatest change of all, the change portended by the growth of tolerance and the new interest in the study of comparative religion, shall be the common advance of the educated world toward a point where, from the ancient citadels of their several faiths, open-minded lovers of God and of the world's betterment shall see a common truth, shall desire a common experience, shall come and stand as brothers on the common ground of one absolute religion.

As our mind adjusts itself theoretically to such an issue, we apprehend its reasonableness and its blessedness. Such a consensus and convergence upon one absolute religion would cast no discredit upon earlier and less universal forms of faith. It would not require us to revile the beliefs of our forefathers, nor to impugn their intelligence or their sincerity. A man when he is full-grown puts aside many things which meant much for his boyhood; but the putting aside of that which, in the evolution of life, ceases to meet our present need involves no dishonour to what, having done its work, is now, reverently, laid down. Nor would convergence upon one absolute religion presuppose uniformity of religious expression or religious practice—a condition as little to be desired as to be anticipated. It would mean participation in the substance of common truth, with local adaptations

of that common possession to each sharer in the substance. The individuality of nations, the sacred heritage of national spirit and custom, in no wise would be impaired by the prevalence of an absolute religion; for no religion could maintain its tenure of the title "absolute" that lacked that universality in relation to time and place which made it in the highest and holiest sense of the phrase, "all things to all men"—a religion wide and all-embracing as the world itself.

The blessedness of such an advance as we are now considering is as great as its reasonableness. The Spirit of God, we must believe, has moved in the world during all the painful vicissitudes of its history, ever seeking the advancement of man, and working, through the inspiration of chosen souls, for the unifying of the race by the power of the truth. The obstacles in the path of that unification have been many. Perhaps the greatest have been the isolation of nations and the absence of a common ethical standard. The nations have lived apart, walled in by the battlements of prejudicial ignorance, or meeting in the bitter rivalries of war As we look back upon the Middle Ages, the face of the world is like a landscape of fortified peaks separated by yawning abysses. The intellectual Renaissance had not come; the modern social Renaissance had not appeared; the fellowship and community of nations was an unrealised conception. Hatred, misrepresentation, astounding absence of correct knowledge distorted and retarded the growth of the world. Nor was there any approach to a common ethical standard. Ignorant of one another's religions, denouncing and despising each other as pagans and infidels, men, made in the image of one God, shunned each other as the progeny of devils, and fought like beasts in wars of extermination.

I do not permit myself to overestimate our present degree of emancipation from these distressing conditions, nor to indulge the pleasing fiction that even the most enlightened nations are fully purged from the old blindness and bitterness. I fear that many a just indictment could be drawn against the ethics and the politics of nations that claim high rank in the moral scale. But this I know, that the One God is moving in His world, and that a new day is dawning everywhere. The resistless tide of knowledge is doing its work, and what that work is time shall show. The bonds that knit nations together are strengthening. The points of contact relating remote centres of moral power are multiplying between every sunrise and sunset; the cosmopolitan spirit is in the air. What blessedness for the world if, even as I speak, the seekers after God were beginning to see eye to eye, to sheathe the swords of spiritual conflict, and to give the energy, once spent in recrimination, to the greatest work that open-minded men can undertake—the finding of one absolute religion; the acknowledgment of one absolute standard of righteousness, the union of hearts in the brotherhood of truth and in the comradeship of service: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all."[1]

If one of my learned auditors, by following my argument thus far, should be prepared to admit the theoretical proposition of the reasonableness and blessedness of an absolute religion as a means for the unification and betterment of the world, he will perceive that the question which immediately presents itself is: Does any existing religion appear to combine the characteristics required for such immense service to humanity? Religions are

[1] Eph. 4:5, 6.

not produced at the will and bidding of man. They are not manufactured to meet occasions. They are produced by incalculable forces working in incalculable orbits; and, in so far as they partake of truth, they are the works of God. It may be said of every religion containing any measure of the eternal truth that its beginning is mystery. Even so Christ spoke of the mystery of the Divine Life revealing itself in the finite soul: "The wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[1] Hence, if we were agreed to converge upon an absolute religion, we must first seek it among religions that exist. For we have no power to make it at our pleasure. We might indeed construct a theological system, but it would not be a religion until life were breathed into it; and who can give life save One, the Living One, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty? Religions are begotten, not made.

Assuming, then, that there existed among educated and philanthropic men in the several leading faiths of the world a desire to converge upon a common religious basis and to work together for the redemption of humanity; assuming, further, their willingness to examine impartially these several leading faiths with the view of ascertaining which of them combines in itself the requisite characteristics for a service of such stupendous import to our race, the first step would be to determine what characteristics are, in the nature of the case, essential. And this readily may be done when we reflect upon the present state of the world. We have referred to the growth of the cosmopolitan spirit and the prevalence of interna-

[1] John 3:8.

tional intercourse. The isolation of nations is, relatively, a thing of the past. But this does not imply a decline of the national spirit. On the contrary, the individuality of nations, though emancipated from the old crudeness of expression, has lost nothing in intensity. We are more jealous of our traditions, because we realise how easily those traditions, if unguarded, might be swept away in the flood of cosmopolitanism. We are cautious about laying ourselves under obligation to other nations, by adopting their institutions, their manners, or their beliefs, lest thereby we compromise our national individuality and barter away our national birthright. Hence the first question to be raised in determining the possible universality of any existing religion is the question of origin. The history of twenty centuries proves conclusively that no religion can attain universality by force of arms. There is not power enough in any section of the world to impose its beliefs by authority upon the whole world. And the most superficial acquaintance with present conditions assures us that the West never will abandon its religion in favor of one imported from the Orient, nor will the proud and thoughtful East ever humble herself to acknowledge the supremacy of a Western cult.

Near to the question of origin, and with difficulty separated from it, is the question of philosophical method as affecting the possible universality of any existing religion. Thinkableness is the unseen foundation of each religion, and the psychological reason for its existence. A given religion survives in the experience of those who practise it because its propositions, however vague or full of mystery, can be construed in intelligible terms of thought. It is lifeless in another community because its fundamental propositions are unthinkable in the terms of

thought which there prevail. Differences of philosophical method are, without doubt, the highest barriers that divide members and groups of the human race. Colour lines, variations of language, geographical or political boundaries, are relatively unimportant barriers, when compared with the most fundamental distinctions of philosophical method. The author of the phrase "the mental seclusion of India" probably realised the height of this barrier as standing between East and West, and succumbed to the belief that it is insurmountable. Without in the least sharing his discouraging opinion, it may be granted that the chief progress toward the union of hearts in East and West must be on the lines of philosophical method, in finding a common basis for the connotations of the terms of thought. And it may be accepted as an axiom that no religion successfully can hold the title "absolute" unless its major propositions are broad enough to be construed in the terms of various philosophical methods; to be thinkable, so to say, in more than one mental language.

Following hard upon these characteristics comes the vital matter of moral initiative. The educated thought of the world has advanced to a degree that precludes the recognition of any religion as of universal validity unless it possesses intense moral initiative for society and for the individual. For, as we have shown in an earlier lecture,[1] "the incoming century finds many thousands of souls, representing all the greater nations and the greater faiths of East and West, filled with the conviction that the world is capable of being made better, and that humanity has the right to be redeemed; that sin is the plague that blasts social and personal life, and that they that are

[1] See Lecture IV on "The Sin of Man and the Sacrifice of Christ," p. 148.

strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves." This growing conviction cannot be put aside: it is resolute, intelligent, serious. It would be busy, not with the appeasing of gods, but with the redeeming of men. It takes interest in the life that now is and in the lives of men that are and that are to be. It is looking everywhere for something that has moral initiative; for leverage to lift men and nations to a higher level of existence. Unabashed, it calls in question its own ancestral beliefs, weighs them in the balance, and, if it find them wanting, throws them aside and experiments with the ethics of agnosticism or secularism. The moral initiative of the absolute religion shall not be produced by the appeal to superstitious dread; for the growth of knowledge, the illumination of nature by the light of science, is dispelling a thousand terrors that once might be invoked in the name of religion. Nor can it proceed from the pessimistic view of existence, for although that may prompt to deeds of charity and to practices of gentleness, its moral force is weakened by every advance in civilisation that reveals the worth and excellence of the present life as a theatre of human action. Nor can the moral initiative be supplied by fatalism, the stern creed of necessity; for the trend of modern culture is toward a fuller recognition of the freedom of the human will and its controlling influence upon life. Moral initiative—which is power to grapple with evil and to lay hold of good, enthusiasm for righteousness, hatred of sin, self-sacrificing effort to redeem others—presupposes a deep conviction of the nature of sin as a blight upon existence, an offence against God. Its producing causes are a high view of the holiness of God, a deep sense of the value of man. Given a religion with these as its

dominant principles, and its significance as a moral dynamic shall appear wherever its presence, not in name but in reality, extends.

As we reflect upon the requisite characteristics of an absolute religion, one is suggested to us by the prevailing temper of the world in this opening century. The mental attitude of the most enlightened communities, at the present time, is that of expectancy. The principle of evolution, to which I have made repeated references, has imparted new hopefulness to the world. The world begins to realise that it is not chained to a dead past, but is free to advance in a living present. Action, upon all lines, is being undertaken with pronounced regard for the future. Repugnance to change, which is the distinctive mark of unqualified conservatism, is being modified even in unlooked-for quarters, apparently by a growing belief in the possibility of better things. The face of the thinking world looks forward. The religion in which the manifold progressive elements in this forward-looking age could conceivably find a common basis must be a religion in line with the future; a religion of hope; a religion which is itself an evolutionary force, instinct with life, creative, constructive, expansive; cherishing its own history, yet not content therewith; forgetting, in the ardour of its earnestness, the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

When, with these four characteristics in mind—suitability of origin, breadth of philosophical method, strength of moral initiative, and hopefulness—I search among the greater faiths of mankind for one that might, if men desired to use it, be available for the vast and beneficent ends of an absolute religion, I look not altogether in vain. I approach the religion of Christ and

apply to it the tests of universality. At first I am discouraged by the many limitations that surround it and that appear to disqualify it for a function so exalted. I note that it has existed upon earth for almost two thousand years, yet has by no means demonstrated its universality in terms of numerical progression. Certain non-Christian faiths are more extensive numerically, and their collective preponderance is overwhelming. I observe that, up to this time, its sphere of influence has been chiefly among nations of the West; that its identification with Western institutions and manners has been so complete as to give it, in the eyes of many, the appearance of a Western faith. I see that in the West, where its prevalence has been marked, its course has been difficult and tumultuous. Controversy has beat upon it like a storm against the wall; schism has wounded it at many points; its adherents have not been in agreement among themselves; its foes often have been they of its own household. I perceive, further, that many of its alleged representatives have discredited its fair name by lives that violated its precepts and set at nought its ideals; and that governments, professing to be its champions, have countenanced or committed deeds incompatible with its elementary tenets of justice, mercy, and love.

But when I proceed to examine these limitations, I find that they are external, incidental, and no part of the essence of the religion of Jesus Christ. They are indeed melancholy and hindering accessories which, by the frailty or vanity of man, by the malignant insistance of his prejudices, or the deficiency of his knowledge, or the madness of his ambition, have fastened themselves upon the religion of Christ as the barnacles upon the ship, retarding its progress. But the lamentable

accessories are no more of the substance of the religion than the barnacles are of the substance of the ship that they impede. It is, therefore, not to the unhappy limitations that attest man's weakness, but to the uncorrupted essence of the religion of Jesus Christ that I proceed to apply the tests of universality: suitability of origin, breadth of philosophical method, strength of moral initiative, and the spirit of hopefulness.

So deep and sacred is the national spirit in communities of enlightenment and culture, so final the refusal to surrender individuality by voluntary submission to an alien faith, that no rational discussion of the present question is possible until the suitability of origin is established. Already in this lecture I have said: The West never will abandon its religion in favour of one imported from the Orient, nor will the proud and thoughtful East ever humble herself to acknowledge the supremacy of a Western cult. Such transfers are impossible even were they desired; and undesirable even were they not impracticable.

No humiliation of the national spirit, in any quarter of the world, would occur, should there be an intelligent movement of convergence upon the religion of Christ as the common basis of thought and effort for the time to come. If the circumstances attending the origin of any faith could prophesy universality, such a forecast of destiny appears in the genesis of the religion of Jesus Christ. It sprang neither from the ancient and powerful seats of oriental empire, nor from the palaces and universities of Europe; but from Palestine, a land whose political individuality long before had been obliterated, lying midway between East and West, the highway of nations, the cross-roads of the world. Its historical ante-

cedent was the unique community of Israel—a people without ethnic relation to Europe or India; of alien stock; incapable of affiliation with the world; doomed to an earthly immortality of disintegration and suffering; "destroyed as a nation, yet indestructible as a people;" without political or military influence, yet incomparable in moral and spiritual power. Of Israel, according to the flesh, Christ came. The veil of mystery enshrouded His Birth. The courtyard of a travellers' rest house was His place of nativity; the chances of a traveller's lot were the portion of His manhood; the bitterness of a death of ignominy was His reward. Yet in His own speech and self-consciousness, in the assured belief of His disciples, in the august tradition that, by many centuries, preceded Him and foretold His coming, was the persistent note of universality. The most sacred heirloom of Israel was the Abrahamic promise, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."[1] The fundamental duty of His ordained messengers was to ignore national distinctions and preach His Gospel to the whole creation; the point of view of His own self-consciousness was that of the Light of the world, who, if He should be lifted up from the earth, would draw all men unto Himself.[2] If the commanding influence of this Christ should now convince the East, it would be but an extension of His inscrutable triumph who already has spoken the word of His peace to barbarous and brutal tribes of the West, transforming their manners, co-ordinating their undeveloped powers, laying in their midst the foundations of a kingdom that is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.[3] If the aggressive and power-loving West has found it blessed

[1] *Cf.* Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:15-18.

[2] John 12:32.

[3] Rom. 14:17.

to be conquered by that Warrior without a sword, to be ruled by that King without an army, the convergence of the thoughtful East upon the religion of the Nazarene would involve, in like manner, no slightest surrender of the national spirit.

If we test the religion of Jesus Christ as to its breadth of philosophical method, its thinkableness in the terms of more than one intellectual system, the evidence to that effect is found to be both internal and external. It is impressive to note that Christ conceives of Himself as the Light of the world. He speaks of His Death as the giving of Himself for the life of the world.[1] His teachings contain nothing of an exclusive or sectarian character. As He knows Himself to be the manifested God, He also knows that the Spirit of God shall interpret and reveal Him to the understandings and hearts of all teachable persons the world over.[2] There is no reservation attached to His promise: "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."[3] And so, with complete assurance of the thinkableness of His religion in the terms of all the systems of human thought, He leaves with His disciples this charge as He withdraws His Bodily Presence: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, unto the uttermost part of the earth."[4] No other thought concerning His relation to mankind appears to enter His mind than that His illuminating words and His sacrificial work alike are for the use and advantage of the undivided human race. That those who were most closely associated with Him in the days of His Flesh and best understood His thought thus apprehended it, appears from the whole range of the Apos-

[1] *Cf.* John 6:51.
[2] *Cf.* John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11.
[3] *Cf.* John 8:12.
[4] Acts 1:8.

tolic teaching. They conceived their message to be so broad that it could be translated without difficulty, not into the vernaculars of the lip only, but into the vernaculars of the mind, of all races. For Christ Himself was not, in their thought, ethnic, but universal; not the citizen of a local state, but the Incarnate Representative of Humanity even as also the Incarnate Manifestation of Deity. So cries St. Paul: "Men of every nation are renewed in His image;—where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all."[1] And St. John, beholding in vision the gathering throng of those who, trained in many philosophical methods, have found Christ interpreting Himself in the terms of all, declares: "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues, stood before [Him] and cried, Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the Throne."[2] The most impressive experience of my intellectual life has been the discovery, during these three years of humble preparation for this Eastern lectureship, that I, a Christian of the West, scarcely had begun to realise the absolutely world-wide scope of the fundamental ideas of the religion of Christ until I beheld them illuminated by Eastern philosophy and stated in terms of Oriental thought. Then it dawned upon me that the West needs the East, quite as much as the East needs the West, if humanity is to measure the depth and height and breadth and length of the Gospel of the Son of God. It is reported, in one of the Old Testament chronicles, that the Queen of Sheba, who long had heard of the magnificence of the temple of Solomon, at length paid a visit thereto. Overpowered

[1] Col. 3:11. [2] Rev. 7:9.

by splendours whose realities exceeded anticipation, she cried: "Behold the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."[1] Even so had I, a Christian of the West, been taught to believe that in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that His relation to the world so involves the very substance of life as to interpret itself, not only to the conscience, but to the intellect of every man. But when, leaving the familiar intellectual environment of my fathers, I sought the atmosphere of Eastern culture, only to find the leading conceptions of Christianity taking on there a new wealth of meaning that came to me as with the glory of a fresh revelation, I said in my joy: Behold the half was not told me; Thy wisdom, O Christ, exceedeth the fame which I heard!

Suitability of origin and breadth of philosophical method are not the only tests of universality which one must apply to the uncorrupted essence of the religion of Jesus Christ, in the effort to ascertain its fitness to be the absolute religion. Strength of moral initiative and hopefulness must be there; or, being weighed in the balance, it shall be found wanting.

Strength of moral initiative, power to make men better, is the distinctive form in which the religion of Christ acts as a force in human life. Every religion has a reason for its existence. The scope of that reason determines in each case the sphere of influence of the religion to which it is attached. Ceremonialism may be the reason for the existence of a religion. It may continue to live for the purpose of keeping up certain ceremonies handed down from antiquity. The ceremonies may be worthy of maintenance, but the possible sphere of influ-

[1] *Cf.* 1 Kings 10:1-13.

ence for a religion that exists only to maintain these ceremonies cannot extend to those who have no interest in the ceremonies and have no desire for their maintenance. The propitiation of gods may be the reason for the existence of a religion. Its continuance may be based on the theory of angry, cruel, or tyrannical deities, who will cause pain and loss unless a certain tribute is paid to them. Fear, the dread of disaster, the belief that the world is haunted by dangerous and malign spirits, may serve to perpetuate systems of worship and sacrifice, in the highest degree impressive. Nevertheless, the sphere of influence open to such religions cannot extend to those who believe in one God only, and in Him as the most faithful, most loving, most self-sacrificing of Friends; who needs not to be propitiated, inasmuch as He Himself has suffered for us that He might deliver us from our sins and reconcile us unto Himself. Despair may be the reason for the existence of a religion—despair prompted by the inherent misery of life. Belief in God may vanish; the desire to live may perish; escape from the wretchedness of finite being may be the goal of effort; and patient endurance, deeds of gentleness, habits of purity, may be the rule of conduct. Nevertheless, potent as such a religion is among those who can live without God and without hope in the world, its sphere of influence never can extend to regions where finite existence is held to be a boon and not a curse.

The religion of Jesus Christ finds the reason for its existence, not in ceremonialism, not in the propitiation of gods, not in despair, but in the effort to make man better. It rests on the presumption that good, not evil, is the normal lot of man; that love, not hatred, is the temper of the heart of God; that sin, not fate, is the barrier stand-

ing between man and happiness, the plague whose poison courses through the world. The religion of Jesus Christ exists through its strength of moral initiative. But for this it would have perished in its youth, for all faiths conspired to crush it out. But it was indestructible; not because it could shelter itself behind the ramparts of military power; not because it appealed to the fears or the lusts of mankind; but because, by the Divine purpose of Him who gave it to the world, it contained power which, in these latter days, open-minded men of all faiths are coming to realise as the thing most needed upon earth; power to deal with the plague of sin; power to purge the soul of its corruption; power to break the shackles of corroding habit; power to awaken sleeping impulses of good, to implant new affections, to bring in a new order of moral existence, for the individual, for the family, for the nation, for the world.

With this strength of moral initiative the religion of Jesus Christ joins hopefulness, which is the fundamental condition of social recovery and reform. Ceremonialism and the appeal to fear doubtless have their place in the sum of influences that promote the moral education of the race. But, unless one quite misreads such signs of the times as the growing intercourse of nations, the spread of knowledge, the advance of democracy, and the revolt from superstition, the age is coming fast when the co-operation of all educated and right-minded men for the betterment of humanity shall prove the Divine insight that was given of old to that Christian Apostle who said: "We are saved by hope."[1] A ceremonialism that becomes an end in itself, existing to perpetuate a method of antiquity; a bitter creed of fear that makes of one's

[1] Rom. 8:24.

mortal life a weary effort to avert the wrath or caprice of gods; a doctrine of despair that turns thought inward, in sad refusal to believe in external reality, in mute, submissive separation from the glorious energies that gather volume with each new struggle for victory—these are religions that have won immortal distinction in history by their loyalty to the past, by the sincerity of their adherents and the brilliancy of their leaders, by their enormous contributions to the religious development of the world. But, in the unfoldings of time, and with the advent of forces, scientific and social, that have opened the world, developed its resources, augmented its knowledge, and altered its point of view, that which humanity waits for as the charter of redemption is a religion of hope, a religion in line with the future, a religion in sympathy with all the people, a religion that develops individual character and educates men to know and claim and exercise their God-given rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And of such a spirit is the religion of the eternal Son of God. Hopefulness is its essence. In the synagogue of Nazareth He opened His lips and spake, whilst men wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."[1] The whole attitude and mind of Christ encourage hope. None so well as He understood the sinfulness of sin; none so deeply proved the mysteries of evil that poison society and draw men to perdition; none so deeply drank

[1] *Cf.* Luke 4:16, 22.

of the cup of suffering. In the solitariness of sacrificial love He trod the wine-press alone; and, bowed to the earth in the travail of His soul, endured the agony of spiritual conflict, in which His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. He shunned not the cross, from which He might have escaped; but, with words of forgiveness and blessing on His lips, tasted death for every man, the just for the unjust, that He might reconcile the world unto Himself. Then, breaking the bonds of the grave, and casting away its cords from Him, ascending up on high, leading captivity captive, and giving gifts unto men, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.[1] His mission is to make all things new.[2] He, the risen and glorified Christ, is the Author of a living hope in every soul that truly receives Him.[3] If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; all things are become new.[4] Christ is the Friend of man. By the mystery of His Holy Incarnation He has identified Himself with human life; and by the perpetual influence of His Spirit He has introduced into the world an expectation of good, an appreciation of liberty, a zeal for righteousness, a grace for co-operative helpfulness, an immortal hope, by which, for all who are influenced thereby, the world becomes a new world, and all the conditions of life are transformed.

As I close this lecture, in which I have ventured to give utterance to some of the most treasured convictions of my mind, as well as to some of the deepest longings of my heart, may I carry the argument to one further and final stage? I have assumed that a desire conceivably

[1] *Cf.* Heb. 5:7-9. [2] *Cf.* Rev. 21:5.
[3] *Cf.* 1 Pet. 1:3-5. [4] *Cf.* 2 Cor. 5:17.

might exist among liberal-minded men of different faiths, who have a common wish for the world's betterment, to advance to a common basis of belief, which should be to them of the nature of an Absolute Religion. Upon this assumption I have examined, not the highly localised and specialised forms of denominational Christianity, but the uncorrupted essence of the religion of Christ, to ascertain whether, judged by the tests of suitability of origin, breadth of philosophical method, strength of moral initiative, and the spirit of hopefulness, it is prepared to furnish such a basis of belief and action for men of diverse training and tradition, who entertain in common a conviction that the world is capable of being made better, and that sin is the plague that blasts social and personal life.

If, now, it may be further assumed that the religion of Christ in its uncorrupted essence contains these several notes of universality, and might therefore be a basis of common belief and action such as that of which we are in search, there remains only to be considered the relation of the East to this absolute religion. Practical questions of the highest interest are raised when the imagination is permitted to conceive a general acceptance of the religion of Christ by the most cultured and cosmopolitan spirits of India and of the Far East. How could such a movement be effected if there existed in many minds a desire for it? It is foreign to the genius of Christianity to impose itself by authority upon any people or upon any man. There is nothing in the teaching or example of Christ to justify the government of a state in restricting or coercing the beliefs of its subjects. Religion is an affair between the soul and God, and the religious liberty of the individual is

a right upon which the State never can infringe without injustice, and for the protection of which men may well resist and defy the authority of the State. Furthermore, the wholesale imposition of Christianity upon a people, by Act of Government, even if it were to be tolerated, would be a travesty of the truth. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.[1] "The kingdom of heaven," said Christ, "is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."[2] Nor could such a movement as this be brought about by any course of action which would involve the surrender or compromise of that national spirit which, I fondly hope, is growing in India. As a constant reader of Indian newspapers I note with joy the frequent recognition of that spirit as one of the cherished ideals of the future. It is a spirit in no sense inimical to the Sovereign Ruler of India, but rather a normal development of the best life of this vast realm. So was it said the other day, with great thoughtfulness: "There are signs that a vague national idea is floating in the air. What form it will take in the complex organisation of Indian polity it is not possible to foretell. It is a task for some of our best men to note carefully, and make use of the sentiment and the opportunity. For herein is the best impetus that can be given to national progress; more than governments or economic revolutions can effect."[3] Such sentiments honour those who utter them. No acceptance of Christianity that insulted or humiliated such a national ideal could be

[1] Luke 17:20. [2] Matt. 13:31, 32.

[3] Editorial from *The Hindu*, quoted in *Indu-Prakash*, August 4, 1902.

entertained for a moment. How, then, could this movement, now theoretically present to our minds, be effected, if there existed a desire for it? It could come about only as, one by one, the open-minded, the pure in heart, the merciful, the meek, the lovers of humanity, the believers in the betterment of the world, should see eye to eye, and draw together, and learn to trust one another as brethren in Christ Jesus; and for His sake, and for humanity's sake, to make the sacrifices and face the opposition that might arise by reason of their confession of the faith of Christ. I do not underestimate the sacrifices that would be called for in the present structure of Indian society. I do not forget the surrender of social distinction and the severance of social ties that must for a time be endured in the present state of things, were any large number of educated men in India to acknowledge the religion of Christ as the absolute religion. But such is my assurance of the power of Christ to overcome obstacles, and of His religion to modify social institutions, that it is my conviction that if, by common consent, a considerable number of educated leaders would make the sacrifice in the spirit of meekness, their act, prompted by the noblest motives and sustained by the most unselfish devotion, would do more than any other thing in the world to crystallise into reality that vaguely noble national ideal which, as one of your writers tells us, "is in the air." I would not have these men cast discredit on the faiths of their forefathers, nor speak against traditions precious to their own flesh and blood. I would have them face the future and claim their own heritage and right in the religion most in line with the constructive forces that shall shape the future. When I permit myself to contemplate the blessing that would come to the Western

world if the great, religious East were to become the teacher and interpreter of the religion of Jesus Christ, my heart burns within me. Again and again in the course of these lectures I have reiterated my conviction that the Christianity of the West has been, in many ways, an inadequate and imperfect illustration of the uncorrupted essence of the faith of Christ. It is not to us that the East should look for an example for what the power of Christ can effect in the redeeming and sanctifying of nations. All that the West has of moral strength and social purity and spiritual power it owes to Jesus Christ. But evil is mingled with its good and darkness with its light. Not to us, but to Him, shall the far-seeing eyes of the East look when the educated circles of the Orient are prepared seriously to consider the relation of Christianity to the future of the world. Not from us, but from Him and from His Holy Scriptures of truth, shall the deep spiritual insight of the East receive the revelation that shall be incorporated with its own traditions and assimilated into its own institutions. In the day when the vigour of the West and the insight of the East shall be joined by a true union of hearts for the interpretation and practice of the faith of Jesus Christ, then, and not till then, shall the Unspeakable Gift of God be understood, appreciated, and expressed on earth.

## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON JAPAN

Among the great non-Christian nations Japan is the first to come in contact with Western powers without war; the first to adopt a constitution with representative institutions, and one that guarantees religious liberty; the first to abolish trial by torture, to overthrow caste distinctions, and to make all equal before the law; the first and only one to gain freedom from exterritoriality, which this patriotic and sensitive people justly hated, and yet which Western powers as justly imposed until 1900. She is also the first non-Christian nation to cover her territory with schools and make education universal.

A nation of forty-five million people within the brief space of one generation has radically changed its government, laws, social structure, and has greatly modified and elevated its ideals of family life, its ethical standards, and its religious thought. There is nothing in all history that compares with this swift upward transformation.

So great a change is possible only when there is a highly developed moral and religious basis in the hearts of the people. The history of Japan has some of the noblest characters that can be found anywhere outside of the influence of Christian teachings. It contains the story that is nearest the story of the Cross of Christ—that of Sakura Sogoro, who gave himself to be crucified that he might save the people of his province from cruel oppression and ruin. The records of different parts of the empire contain numerous examples of noblest self-sacrifice for others.

Of the four ethical characteristics of the people, as

given by the Reverend T. Harada, the first is *the Sense of Ought.* Everything must be sacrificed on the altar of duty. As one of their proverbs says: "The most sacred relations must give way before great duties." Knowing that the path of duty would lead to certain death, there are many instances scattered through their history of women and youths as well as of men who unhesitatingly chose to surrender life. "Full well I knew this course must end in death," is a line of one of their well-known poems.

Self-sacrifice is the highest point in Christian ethics. It is also the height of moral living in Japanese history. Whatever may be said of the moral degradation of the people in certain lines, through it all shines the clear light of this noble principle of self-sacrifice that saves a nation from political and social corruption. This principle has won so deep a place in the moral life of Japan that the people have no difficulty in understanding the self-sacrifice of Christ. Before an audience of a thousand teachers, a professor in the Imperial University who had written and spoken strong words against Christianity recently said: "Jesus was crucified between two thieves. Who knows the names of the thieves? No one in the whole wide world. But there is no one under heaven who does not know the name of Jesus. Why? Because of his noble morality. He is immortal."

There is no room here to follow out other lines of Japanese ethics. This is enough to show that the swift and successful adoption, on the part of a great non-Christian nation, of new government, new laws, new social ideals based on the worth and dignity of the individual, was possible because of their already highly developed moral nature.

Their religious life also is no small factor in their moral living. If condensed into one sentence, this religious life rests on faith in the gods, who always have been represented by the Imperial Line; which (Shinto) faith was modified, on the one hand, by the Buddhist religion and philosophy, and, on the other, by Confucian ethics.

Ancestor-worship, which we of the West have not only outgrown but regard as a sign of deep heathenism, has its noble side and has been an immense blessing to the whole East. In the pantheistic stage, through which in the divine economy mankind must pass, in all probability there could never have been any permanent family except by the moral aid of ancestor-worship.

Buddhism, as it stands in modern Japan, has two widely different aspects. With scholars it tends to philosophy; with the masses, to idolatrous superstition. But, nevertheless, every candid student must see that it has been of untold benefit in strengthening the religious nature, and also in inculcating peace and pity, as well as in teaching the civilising influences of architecture, sculpture, painting. It has greatly encouraged literature and love of the beautiful.

Confucius's priceless contribution to Japanese civilisation is *the Five Relations.* This great moral prophet taught these relations in this order: parents and children; lord and retainer; husband and wife; brothers and sisters; and friends. China has always emphasised the first, and her over-emphasis of this one relation, with its ancestor-worship, is what holds her back from the acceptance of modern civilisation. Japan reversed the order of the first two relations and placed high in her ethics the relation of lord and retainer, with the worship of the Imperial House and loyalty that knows no fear of death. This

made her a martial people, fond of daring adventures, and fitted her for intercourse with Western nations on terms of mutual respect and benefit.

This mingling of various religious and moral ideas brought forth some noble manifestations of spiritual living. It is sometimes said that Japan is a nation without a religion. It is not true now and never has been. Old Japan has her prophets who can be accounted for in no other way so well as by ascribing to them the leading of the Holy Spirit of God. The Reverend T. Miyagawa, in a recent address to a body of missionaries, called attention to some examples of this, one of which is as follows: Nakal Tojio speaks thus of God: "There is a great Lord over all. This Lord is the great and only Spirit. He is the Lord and Father of heaven and earth and all things. From the mighty universe to the tiny mote, from the eternity to the moment, there is nothing outside of his glorious regard. His mystery fills all space—God of God, Spirit of Spirit." One more is worthy of the attention of the readers of this book: Muro Kyūsō two hundred and fifty years ago said: "Think not that God is distant, but seek him in the heart, for the heart is the house of God."

Now, ancestor-worship is never able to withstand international intercourse. It is of necessity a narrow religion until it breaks forth into the universal—the worship of the God and Father of us all. Japanese Buddhism, itself a great departure from original Buddhism, is being again greatly modified by modern science and Christian ethics. And the Confucian relations are being widely interpreted in terms of Christian thought.

In other words, the moral and religious history of Japan reveals a divine preparation for the larger and final

message of God in his Son. In the fullness of time God calls upon his children to give this people through old and new channels the most complete expression of Christian truth. At the same time the spirit in which we do this is important. We must believe that such a people, with such a moral and religious history, will not only receive Christian truth, but will also contribute something to the fuller interpretation of the exhaustless Gospel of Christ. We apart from them cannot be made perfect in the knowledge of God.

Christian truth naturally will first appeal to the Japanese on ethical lines. In three important respects Japan has already welcomed the teachings of Christ, confessedly recognising their superiority and universality. Chastity for man as well as for woman; the humanitarian spirit as exemplified in what is perhaps the largest Red Cross Society in the world; and the worth and dignity of the individual—these are the distinctive contributions of Christianity to the ethical life of New Japan.

What are called the supernatural elements in Christianity become at once stumbling-blocks to intelligent Japanese. From a people still held in the pantheistic philosophy of the past, the doctrines of a personal God, a Divine and Risen Saviour, and personal immortality meet with objections, especially when they suspect that the scholars of the West are outgrowing these beliefs. Personality in God seems to reduce him to very small terms in comparison with limitless "Heaven," or the vague and unknowable "Soul of the Universe." The Resurrection is a far greater stumbling-block than the Cross. Their idea of immortality is that of a people, of society, of the family, and of a name, rather than that of the individual.

Under these circumstances it is most fitting that representative Christian scholars should be sent direct from Christian institutions of learning to give, to the educated classes of the East, the reasons for the faith within them. It has always been normal for the Church to send forth her missionaries with the Gospel of the Crucified and Risen Christ. Just because this is the definite work of Mission Boards, whose one purpose is to make converts and organise believers into churches, the missionary, however wide his learning, labors under the suspicion, more or less marked, of being a hireling and a propagandist. But for a great university to send out Christian scholars, sympathetic with the religious thought of the world, yet reverently believing in the Divine Son of God, is not only a most timely aid, but is a most welcome method of approaching the scholarly and influential classes. Learning is binding the world into one, and it is meet that consecrated learning should have consecrated messengers to bear direct from the university this greatest of all truths to the thoughtful classes of the East.

Mr. J. R. Mott, sent by Christian students to the students of the East, had wide and abiding successes that would have been impossible had he gone under a Mission Board. The work of young men for young men has won so high a place in Japan that at the tenth anniversary of the Young Men's Christian Association in Tokyo, Baron Maejima, an ex-cabinet officer, said: "I firmly believe we must have religion as the basis of our national and personal welfare. No matter how large an army or navy we may have, unless we have righteousness at the foundation of our national existence we shall fall short of highest success. I do not hesitate to say that we must rely upon

religion for our highest welfare. And when I look about me to see what religion we may best rely upon, I am convinced that the religion of Christ is the one most full of strength and promise for the nation."

The point to bear in mind is that a most effective Christian work is possible outside of the organised work of missions and their churches, by men sent directly by students and institutions of learning.

President Charles Cuthbert Hall, a university scholar sent by a university to the scholarly classes of the East, met with multitudes of people who are indifferent to the work of missionaries. He would not have been welcomed to halls of learning in Japan, and most certainly he would not have been invited to lecture in the Imperial University at Tokyo, had he been a missionary of the Church. Such work as his is exceptionally powerful, not only in overthrowing prejudice, but in creating a sympathetic state of mind towards the vital truths of Christianity, and also in producing positive conviction with many individuals.

This does not mean that the work of missions is weak and that organised Christianity is of little value. On the contrary, the work of these exceptional messengers of Christ would be impossible but for what the Church through her various missions has already splendidly accomplished. The foundations are broadly laid, and the effects of Christian teaching are left for good far outside of the growing churches. There never was a great nation permeated with Christian truth in ethical lines so rapidly as Japan has been. And there never was a time when Christian scholarship had such a grand opportunity of impressing the leading minds of a nation as it has now in Japan.

What the university has begun to do should be prophetic of another needed movement. Commerce, too, is binding the world into one. And we wait the day when successful men of business, so many of whom are splendid givers, and so many of whose lives are a protest against materialism, will commission one and another of their men of faith to visit these Eastern men of business, not only in order to witness to the necessity of commercial morality, but also to proclaim the necessity of the religious spirit which alone makes commerce an unqualified blessing to the race.

JOHN H. DE FOREST.

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